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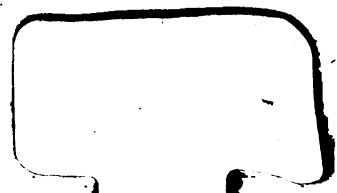
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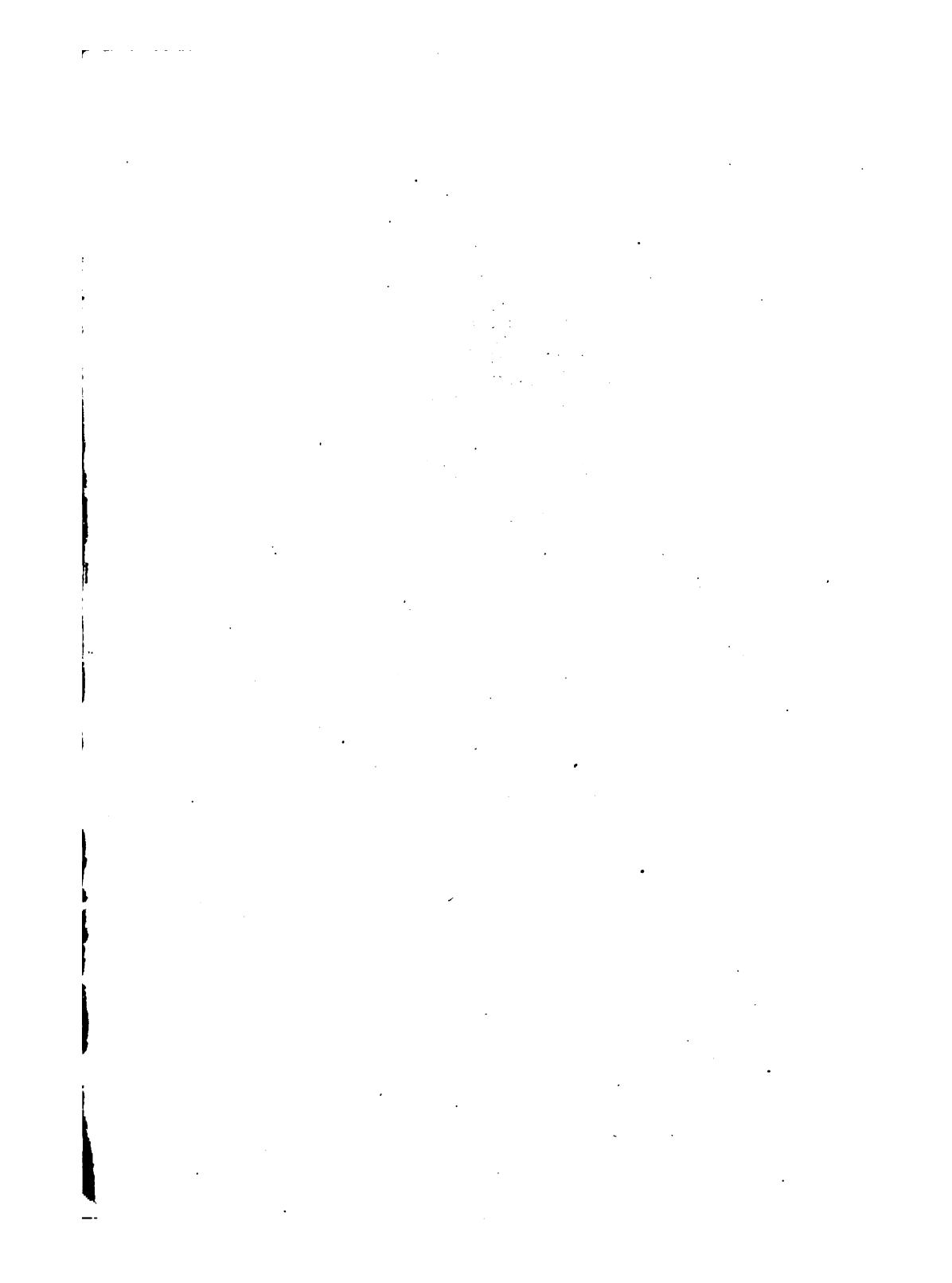
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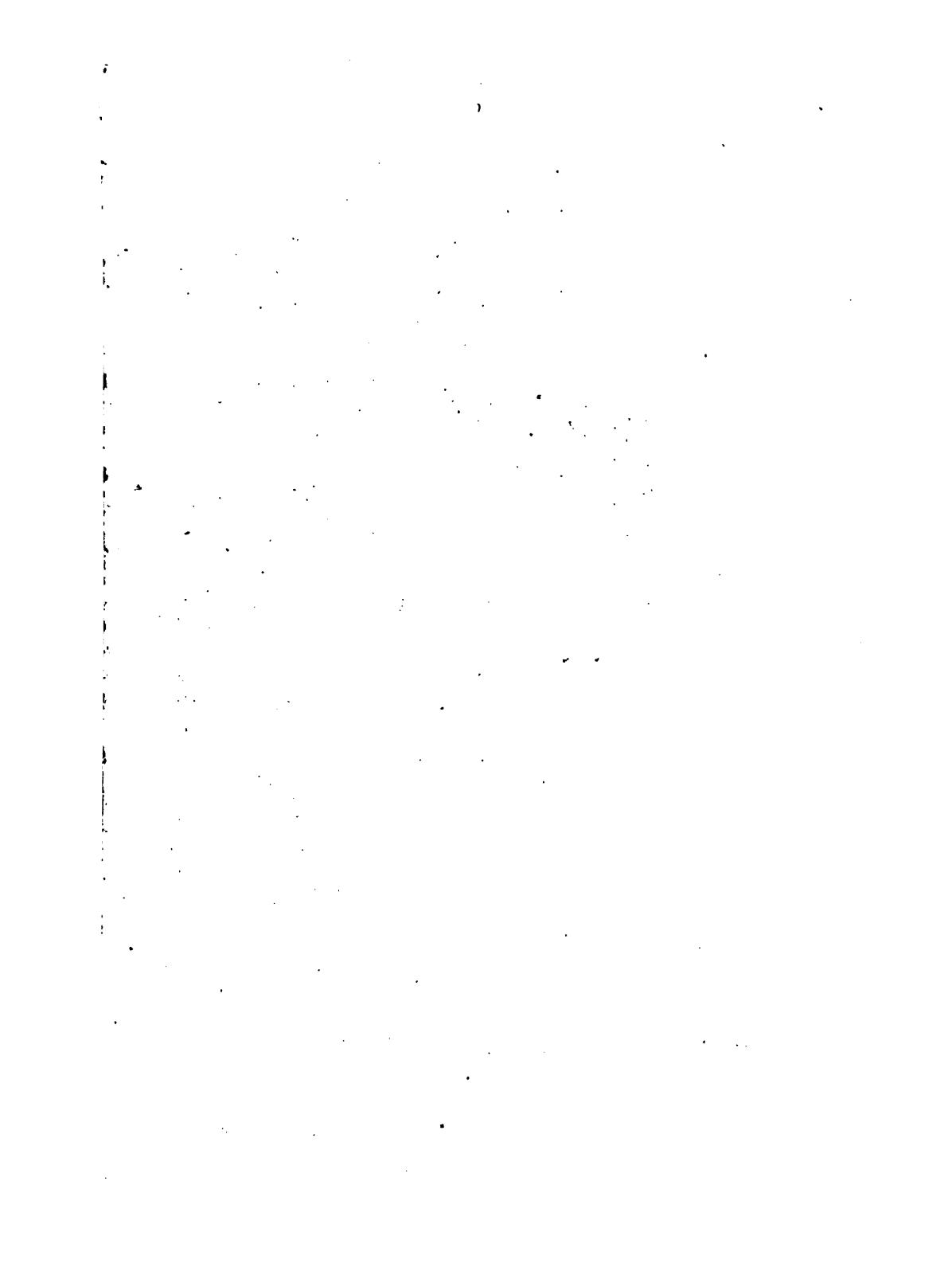




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P O E M S,
LEGENDARY AND HISTORICAL.

LONDON :
SPOTTISWOODES and SHAW,
New-street-Square.





THE GREAT FALLS, SAN FRANCISCO.

P O E M S,

LEGENDARY AND HISTORICAL.

BY

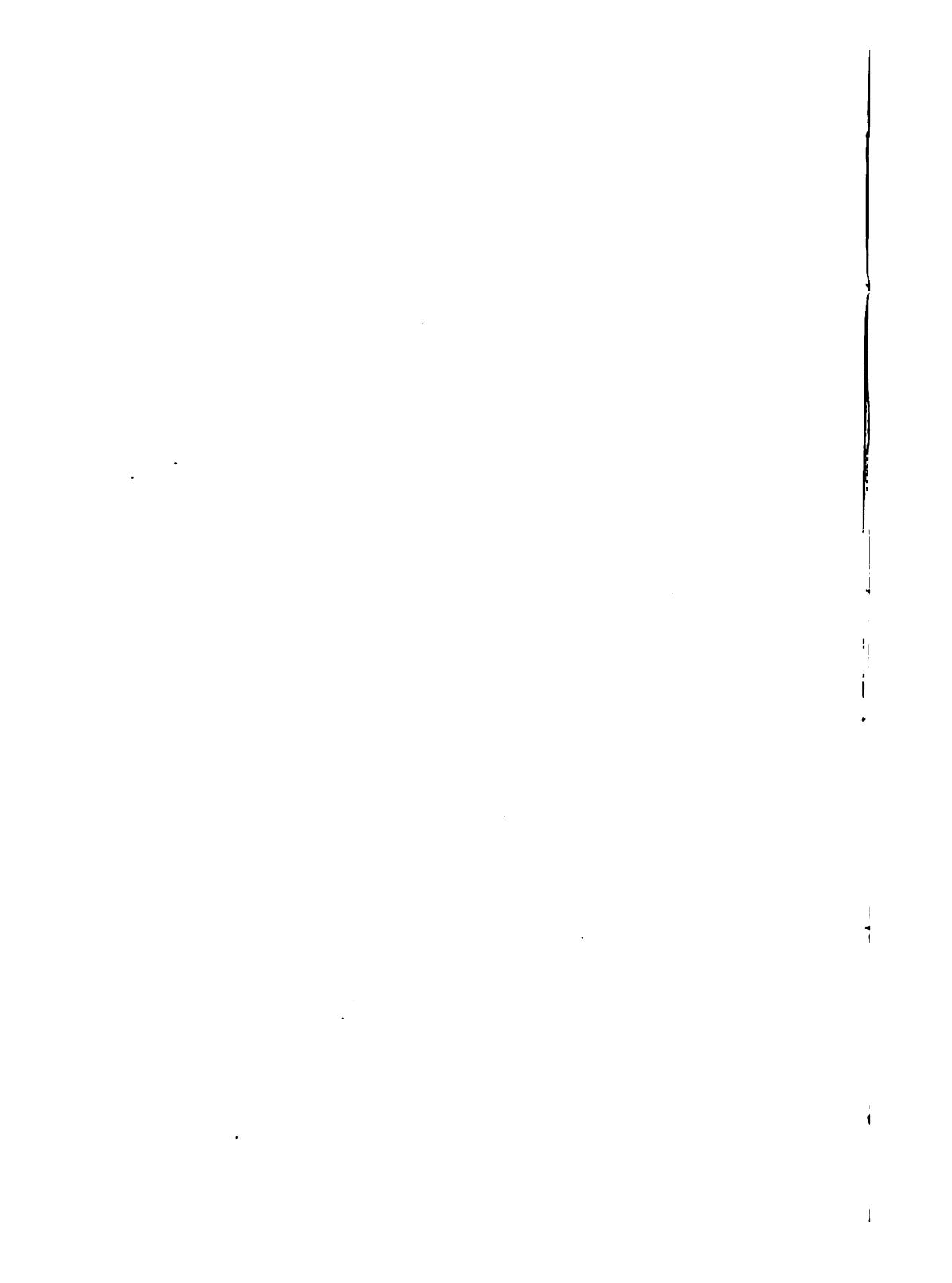
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LONDON:
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P R E F A C E.

THE present collection of poems, with perhaps a solitary exception, consists, according to its title, entirely of pieces relating to past events, and a large majority of them are cast in what is, whether rightly or wrongly, familiarly known as the ballad style. The employment of a form, which has been lately made the subject of much criticism, may demand some prefatory remarks.

It can hardly now be matter of doubt, that the present age may fairly claim to itself a superiority over all that have preceded it, in at least one branch of study, that, namely, of history in all its forms,—from the highest philosophical speculations to the minutest antiquarian research. Nor can it well be a mere accidental

coincidence, that in an age thus devoted to the study of past time, its poetry should to so great an extent have reverted to the earliest and simplest form,—so that in a condition of society the most conventional and the farthest removed from the inartificial cast of thought of earlier generations, its poetry is, in great measure, presented in the form of historical ballads, or narratives embodying, much after the manner of the earlier types, any striking event or scene, the outward action of which is presented with more or less of vividness, without any minuter analysis of inward feelings.

This reproduction of an old form of poetry has by some been ascribed to a want of originality,—on the ground that ballad poetry, as being the fittest vehicle for the expression of the mind of a rude and unreasoning age, is on that very account the kind which most admits of imitation, as it furnishes a collection of phrases applicable to almost every circumstance, and an appropriate expression for every feeling so far as it is evidenced by outward gesture,—this external por-

traiture being, in effect, all that is aimed at, and that, consequently, such composition is scarcely more than a mechanical occupation, the most necessary qualification for which is a well-stored and retentive memory.

In these objections there is doubtless a great amount of truth. Ballad poetry certainly affords more opportunity for the exercise of a merely imitative faculty than any other. It is very practicable to produce a poem which shall be a judicious fitting-in of expressions from ancient poetry, setting before us with sufficient distinctness the feeling or action suggested by the subject; nor would this be more than a piece of successful mechanism.

But we believe that the difference in this respect between the ballad and other styles of poetry is simply one of degree. Be it epic, or lyric, or any other kind, it is as possible to fall into imitation in one as in the rest,—the distinction perhaps between historical and other poetry being this, that in the latter the imitation, although it may prevail to a far greater extent,

is unconscious, and also less apparent,—whole ideas or even successive trains of thought being oftentimes borrowed, with only a change of diction sufficient to disguise them. In the other, an epithet or an expression may be transferred unaltered from one writer to another, without any affectation or desire of concealment. In such instances, a whole phrase may be regarded as one word, expressive of some notion inseparable from the subject spoken of, as the epithets (for example) of the Homeric heroes, or the employment of the same words in all cases to express a particular feeling,—and this, moreover, as occurring not in one author only, many expressions and even lines being found unchanged in Hesiod and in Homer. All these must have had their several sources; yet they become, as it were, the property of all; and the more or less frequent adoption of them can hardly be allowed to stamp a poem as an imitation; the charge, if it is to stand, must be substantiated on other grounds. It seems indeed almost impossible in subjects of this character (putting aside the

occasional conscious employment of an expression belonging to another writer) to avoid some coincidences of a few or more words with others when describing similar events or thoughts, an occurrence especially likely in a piece descriptive of facts; for an historical poem, it seems, must be of this kind (that is, a narration of facts by a lively depicting of the gestures and acts of all concerned, as well as of the scene of action), or it must take the form of words put into the mouth of an historical character, or of an expression of the personal thoughts and feelings of the writer regarding those of whom he is speaking; wherein there may manifestly be far more of approximation to the styles which are not considered imitative, and a much closer analysis of thoughts and emotions may be permitted than in the other. And, possibly, the narrations which are simply historical, assume the ballad form, not so much from any imitation conscious or otherwise, as from the suitableness of this form to the subject. The one leads naturally to the other; and a writer might fall

into it, who possessed but very slight acquaintance with the earlier specimens of national poetry. So that we may fairly venture to claim for such historical poems as much freedom from imitation as for poems of a totally different character. They may all be purely imitative: but they cannot be proved so to be by the mere stating that they are ballad, or lyric, or of any other kind: the charge can with equal facility be brought against all, the only difference being that the supposed imitation is more apparent in one of them, inasmuch as we are generally more disposed to mark the resemblance of words than of ideas. The only exception can be, when any one originates a style wholly his own. How far this is possible in our time, or desirable, is matter of question.

But, on looking closer, this charge of imitation against ballad poetry appears two-fold; sometimes that it is the adoption of an ancient form unsuited to our own times; sometimes that it is an imitation of modern writers in the same style, Macaulay, for instance. With regard to this

latter charge we believe that, unless in the exceptional case just mentioned, it is hardly possible to compose either poetry or prose without some admired author supplying the general model; but we doubt whether this remark is more applicable to one species of composition than another. Macaulay may, to a certain extent, have suggested the general form of these poems, after the same manner that Milton, Byron, Southey, or any other poet, might suggest the general form of other compositions, which would be allowed to stand or fall by their own merits, and not be at once set down as imitative, on the ground merely of their form. And, with regard to imitation of ancient models, we can safely say that in our own case we have not intentionally practised it.

But, in many instances, the charge of imitation is combined with another, viz., that a modern ballad is, after all, very unlike what it is said to imitate. The fact is, that it neither could be, nor is intended to be, otherwise. The case we believe to be this:—the two styles

agree in the one common character of vivid narrative, which cannot be called peculiar to any age or country, and for which the ancient ballad has provided the most appropriate outward form. But further than this no imitation or resemblance need exist. The earlier ballad poetry of a nation is always contemporary, or nearly so, with the facts narrated. The modern poet will combine with his narrative the aspect in which past ages appear to us at the present day, in the same way that the more formal historian, with his totally different view, might still resort for the general model in his actual narrative to the inimitable forms with which Livy has clothed the blind and unreflecting credulity of an earlier age.

We could enlarge much more on these subjects ; but a formal essay on ballad poetry would be quite out of place. All we here wish is to vindicate the claim of our compositions to stand or fall by their own merits or defects, possibly as being really imitative or the contrary, but not to be prejudged as having want of

originality stamped on their very form. In all those which are chiefly narrative, the ballad type may be discerned ; but we have adhered to it, or deviated from it with the same freedom as we should use in any other kind of composition, and without any greater consciousness of imitation.

In accordance with what we before said of narrative poems, we have frequently repeated our own expressions in the same or different pieces, whenever it seemed desirable ; and in some instances we shall be found to have borrowed each from the other ; and with this mention of them, we have thought it needless to specify them severally where they occur. In the same way, although much more rarely, an expression has occasionally been transferred unchanged from another author ; and such an adoption, undisguised, of phrases which may now be regarded as the recognized mode of expressing certain thoughts, seems at the same time as high a tribute as it is in our power to pay to another writer. One poem* there is,

* Recollections of Childhood.

which can scarcely be called either legendary or historical, except in so far as one or two historical associations are incidentally introduced into it. In another*, though put into the mouth of an historical character, there is no narrative, nor any approximation to the ballad form ; and we may perhaps be allowed to say that we have not felt conscious of any greater or less degree of originality in these than in others which might seem to be formed more closely after an earlier model.

The poems entitled "The Meed of Heroes," and "King Harold's Funeral," have already appeared in a volume of "Original Ballads, by Living Authors," and in part the "Legend of the Alhambra," but the last two portions, as they now stand, are entirely different.

E. A. F.

G. W. C.

*Oaklands, Dursley,
August 28. 1850.*

* Harold and Edith.

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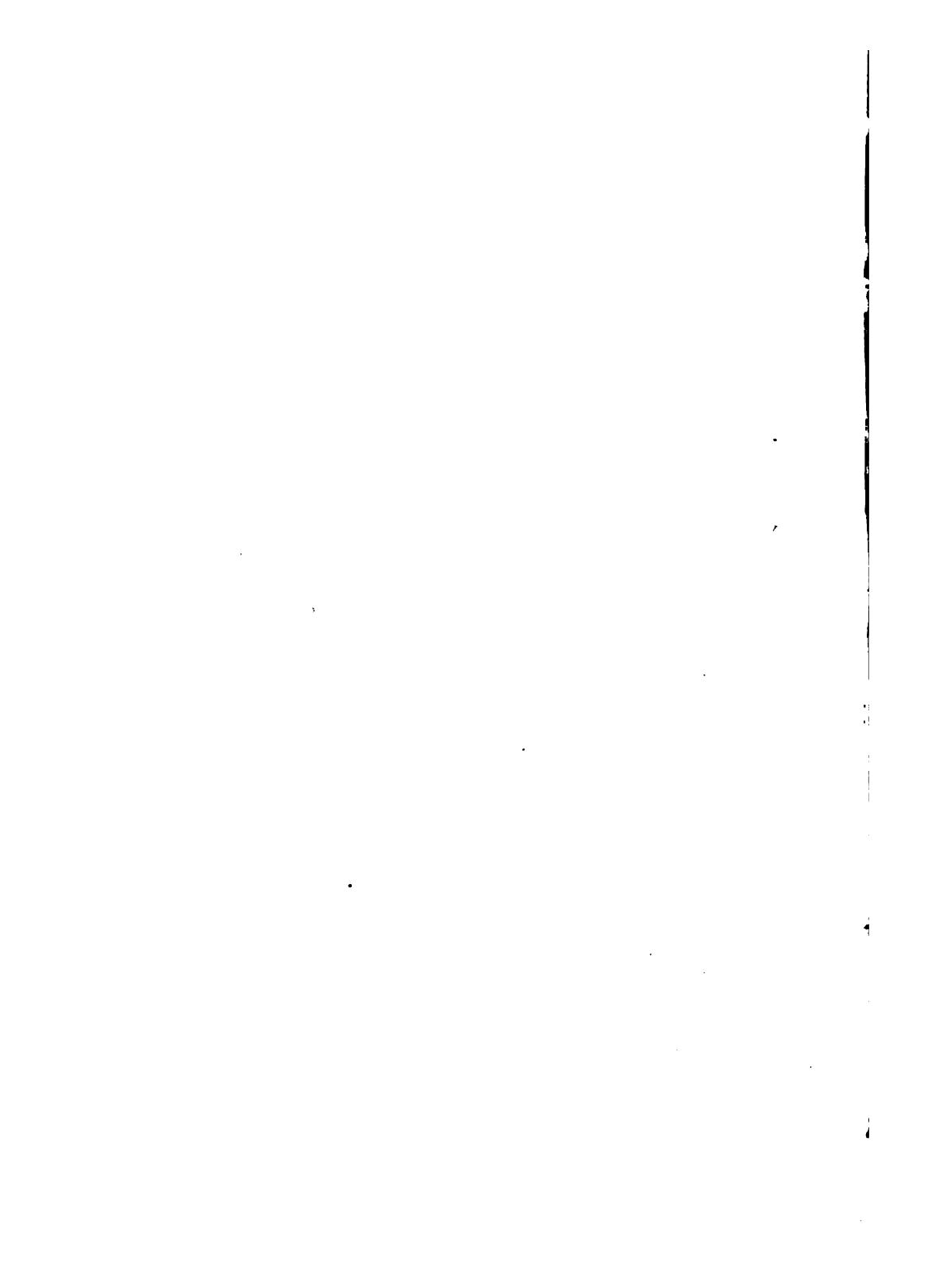
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SONGS OF GREECE.

B



SONGS OF GREECE.

POSEIDON AND ATHENA.

THE main story, a versification of which is here attempted, the author would fain hope will sufficiently speak for itself. The minuter mythological and historical allusions must share the fate of all such: to the scholar, explanation would be superfluous; to others, very superficial.

It is hardly necessary to point out that the 19th stanza expresses only the popular Athenian notion of the act of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, without entering into the historical question connected with it, much less into the morality of their proceedings.

1.

THE Gods are taking counsel upon earth.

Hard by Cephisus' stream

Twelve golden thrones, twelve golden footstools gleam
Pitched for the deathless powers of Cronian birth.

There, high above them all,
Is he who holds the world in thrall,
The might of Zeus most high.
His brow is smooth, his voice is bland,
No lightnings sparkle in his hand,
Yet speaks there fate in his command,
And Gods might tremble at his stedfast eye.

Close at his side
Is throned, in matron's seemly pride,
His sister and his queen.
Eight Gods are sitting round,
All in their glory crowned,
On thrones of brightest sheen.

2.

There is he, the pure, the bright ;
Lord of vengeance, lord of light ;
He who loves on earth to dwell
With the men who please him well ;
Him that keeps his hands from wrong,
Him that twines the wreath of song :
Yet hath he his silver bow,
Strung to lay the proud ones low,
Who shall scorn his word divine,
Or shall rob his holy shrine.

3.

By his side his sister fair,
She who loves the mountain air,
She who speedeth fast and free
With her kirtle to her knee,
O'er her back her quiver swung,
And her bow for pastime strung ;
She who flees the busy throng
And the voice of bridal song,
But, from cities far away,
Loves with all her nymphs to play,
By Eurotas' fragrant rills,
Maiden of the Dorian hills.

4.

There sat the powers of fire,
The God who sprang to life without a sire,
The strong Hephaestus hight ;
And Hestia too, who guards the hearth of home.
And he who from high heaven's all-gleaming dome
Oft springs to earth with pennons light,
To work his father's high behest,
Or dwell with man a welcome guest,
Hermeias ever gay and ever bright.

There, too, the mother grave and mild,
Who sought so long her ravished child ;
 Back from her queenly brow
The wreath of poppies binds her yellow hair ;
 The kindly power that gave the plough,
 And bade the wild and barren lands
Yield to the toil of mortal hands
The crown of golden ears that wave so rich and fair.

5.

There amid the deathless train
Sat the lawless lovers twain ;
Aphrodite with the smile
That can sternest hearts beguile ;
Ares with the brow of fear
Softened as he feels her near :
She the fairest power above,
Queen of laughter and of love ;
She, against whose silken chain
Gods and men may strive in vain ;
She who loves the dance and song
With the Graces' sportive throng :
He, who better loves to hear
Crash of car and clang of spear ;

He who joys to count the slain,
Reeking on the battle-plain ;
Yet he doffs his helm of pride,
Tears his falchion from his side,
As his bosom, wounded sore,
Recks of warfare now no more
Till the snowy arm he feels
Which around him gently steals,
And may taste in many a kiss
More than conquest gives of bliss.

6.

The Gods are taking counsel upon earth.
But wherefore have they left their seats on high ?
Why show they thus to them of mortal birth
The pomp of all their deathless majesty ?
And wherefore empty stand
Two burnished thrones on either hand ?
Why sitteth not his brother by
The next in pride and power,
Who far away from Gods' and mortals' eye
Hath fixed his royal bower ?
Who loves as deep as deep may be
To dwell beneath the wine-dark sea ;

Enthroned in halls wherein the rising day
No lustre kindles with its new-born ray ;
Nor may the moon-beam ever fall
In silver on his palace wall ;
But gems that mortal eye hath never seen
Glow from the purple walls in brighter sheen ;
In living glory beaming
Their rays around are streaming,
Where shells that earth hath never known
Shed back their splendour from his gorgeous throne,
Where coral groves their branches twine around,
A canopy of state for him that shakes the ground.

7.

And where is she, the blue-eyed maid,
In garb of combat fast arrayed ;
Who still in peaceful hall or battle-field
Spreads o'er the wise her guardian shield ;
She who doth her counsel give
Well to rule and well to live ;
And loves to hold her stedfast ægis near
Where Ares in his wrath hath couched his tameless
spear ?

8.

The Gods are taking counsel upon earth;
Each deathless power is choosing for his own,
Among the homes of them of mortal birth,
A realm wherein to fix his hearth and throne.

From proud Mycenæ's spacious streets
Undying prayer the ear of Hera meets ;
Phœbus and his sister fair
Joy to breathe the Delian air ;
Aphrodite far away
Loves in Paphian bowers to play.
But beside Cephisus' stream
Doth a prouder city gleam,
Sprung to new-born life and power
In a bright and happy hour :
Who shall claim her for his own ?
Who shall fix his hearth and throne
In the land so bright and fair,
Beyond Apollo's home and Hera's queenly care ?

9.

Now before the deathless train
Stand the mighty rivals twain.
Bounding o'er the waves afar
Came Poseidon's glittering car ;

One strong hand with well-cut rein
Guides the horses of the main,
While the other, high in air,
Doth the lordly trident bear.
As he hastens on his way,
All around the dolphins play ;
All the monsters of the deep
On his wheels attendance keep ;
Foaming seas are smoothed before him,
Isles and shivered rocks adore him ;
Rivers check their subject waves,
Nereids hasten from their caves ;
All to hail their monarch throng,
Raising high their joyous song,
With a wild and wondrous sound,
To the God that shakes the ground.

10.

Swift athwart the sultry air
Came the blue-eyed maiden fair ;
She hath yoked the goodly steeds
Which the land of Atlas breeds ;
Bounding o'er the Libyan plain
To the cliffs that guard the main ;

Then the clouds that float on high
Joy to bear her through the sky.
Not the shafts of Phœbus' bow
Straighter to their mark can go,
Not Hermeias' pinions twain
Swifter cleave the heavenly plain.
Forward drops each silken fold,
While she grasps the reins of gold,
And the ægis floats behind,
Streaming in the balmy wind.
Onward press the goodly steeds,
Hill nor flood their course impedes ;
On they hasten, on they fly,
Over earth, and sea, and sky ;
Nor may stop their thirst to slake,
From the blue Tritonian lake,
To the burnished thrones that gleam
Fast beside Cephisus' stream.

11.

Now whose shall be the city
Of those strong rivals twain ?
All on their seats of judgment
Are set the deathless train.

Then spake the gay Hermeias,
His voice like trumpet clear :
“ Now listen, Gods and Goddesses,
The will of Zeus to hear.
To claim the new-born city
Two rival powers are found,
The blue-eyed Athenæa
And he that shakes the ground.
Whoe'er the better boon shall give
To them of mortal birth,
Shall reign within that goodly town,
The joy of all the earth.
If King Poseidon now to men
The better boon shall give,
Then Poseidonia's name of pride
To endless years shall live ;
But if the gift Athena brings
The goodlier shall be found,
Then the name of glorious Athens
Shall earth and heaven resound.”

12.

Then arose the King Poseidon,
High he waved his stout right hand,

Full he smote his gleaming trident
On the hard and rocky land.
Like the crash of falling mountains
Echoed far the shivered rock,
And a mighty gulf was yawning,
Cleft beneath the trident's shock.
Forth then came a gallant charger,
Bounding from the riven stone ;
Never sure did mortal ruler
Boast such charger for his own.
O'er his goodly brow and shoulders
Did his mane in tresses flow,
Every hair on all his body
Was as white as Scythian snow.
Proudly gazed he all around him,
Proudly pawed the trembling ground,
Then he dashed towards the meadow
With a free and gladsome bound ;
Wildly streaming in the breezes
Mane and tail like lightning play,
Clearer than Tyrsenian trumpet
Was his loud and joyous neigh.
Thus in new-born life he revelled,
Thus he bounded off afar ;
Never shall a mortal master
Bend his neck beneath his car.

13.

The blessed Gods are cheering loud,
Poseidon's gift to see ;
What boon can Athenæa bring
That shall more precious be ?
The Goddess rises from her throne,
And gaily looks around :
“ Methinks I have a better gift
Than he that shakes the ground.
His tells of blood and slaughter,
When through the ranks of war
The courser draws with eager bound
The hero's gleaming car.
But mine shall tell of peace and love,
Doffed helm and sheath'd sword,
Of sturdy limb and cheerful face,
Of home and festive board.
The better gift to mortal men
Athena's shall be found,
And the name of glorious Athens
Shall earth and heaven resound.”

14.

She planted straight a little seed
Hard by the cloven ground ;

Then sat once more upon her throne,
And gaily looked around.
The little seed has taken root,
The tender sprouts are seen,
And every sprout is budding fast
With leaves of darkest green.
The blessed Gods are marvelling
The wondrous sight to see,
How from the hard and rocky land
Hath sprung that goodly tree ;
The tree that tells of peace and love,
Doffed helm and sheathéd sword,
Of sturdy limb and cheerful face,
Of home and festive board.
Then spake aloud the blessed Gods,
They spake with one accord :
“ A better gift Athena brings
Than Ægæ's dark-haired lord :
The olive-branch of golden peace
Is goodlier boon by far,
Than is the steed that loves to bend
Before the warrior's car.
Be hers the new-born city,
Be hers the chosen ground,
And the name of glorious Athens
Let earth and heaven resound.”

15.

Then, spear in hand, and helm on head,
And ægis o'er her shoulders spread,
The Goddess left her throne ;
She looked upon her chosen land,
She o'er it waved her guardian hand,
And hailed it for her own.

16.

“ And thou art mine, thou fair and goodly land ;
In other soils let richer harvests grow,
In other realms let men of stouter hand
With spear and buckler stem the charging foe ;
Yet shall the town that joys in my command
The yoke of baser ruler never know :
Thine be the arts that glad the wise and free,
And thine the dashing oars that curb the vassal sea.

17.

“ The dark-haired king that may not be thy lord
His rod of empire to thy will shall yield ;
The mother mild shall to thy sons accord
A better gift than Egypt's fruitful field,

Those mystic rites which, even in realms abhorred
Of gods and men, her faithful servants shield ;
While Phœbus' self shall in thy marble live,
And joy of choral songs shall Dionysus give.

18.

“ Thou, too, thou goodly tree ; the foeman’s steel
Shall harm thee not : amid the wasting flame
Of barbarous war, the pledge of Athens’ weal
Unscathed shall live ; while foes of Grecian name
Shall fear to rend Athena’s guardian seal :
Yea, in thy shade shall chiefs of holier fame
Build up a realm for me that may not die,
And gild the chosen shrine of wisdom’s majesty.

19.

“ Land of the free ! thy heart shall never bow
To earthly lord ; before my dearest shrine
I see a mortal bend his haughty brow
Who dares to claim the empire that is mine.
Vain man ! all wreathed within the myrtle-bough
Thou dost not see the patriot dagger shine ;
Thou dost not see the hand that guides the steel
Which Athenea whets for injured Athens’ weal.

20.

“ In vain shall he to whom the nations bend,
From Hæmus’ peaks of everlasting snow
To India’s burning shores, against thee send
The garb of dread, the charger, and the bow ;
My voice shall in thy councils still attend,
My arm shall guide thy spear against the foe,
My hand shall twine the crown for them who won,
Who won the field of fields, the field of Marathon.

21.

“ In vain in freedom’s home the despot’s slave
Shall spread the purple couch of revelry ;
The Mede may trample upon Codrus’ grave,
And hearth and shrine in blackened ruin lie :
Yet tames he not the spirits of the brave ;
Walls are not cities ; to your home ye fly,
Ye have a guard that may not fail or flee,
Your home is the black ship, your realm the subject sea.

22.

“ Land of the free ! I see your ruler stand,
The prince of all your hearts ; upon his brow
No diadem is bound, his good right hand
No sceptre bears, no slaves around him bow :

He needs no foreign spearman's hireling band,
For his the power that despot may not know,
His is the kingly sway of deathless mind,
The honey-flowing speech that heart and soul doth bind.

23.

“ Land of the wise ! I see thee conquered lie,
As others deem ; no subject islands bend
At Athens' name ; no spirits swelling high
With freedom's love the master-voice attend ;
Crushed to the ground is all thy majesty :
Yet doth the world to thee its homage send ;
Thine is the empire still that aye must live
While poet's voice hath charms, or art can glory give.

24.

“ Thou art in thrall,—yet all who would be free
From thee must learn of freedom's earliest day ;
Thy voice is hushed,—yet all must seek from thee
The magic words that freeborn spirits sway ;
Thou art all dark,—yet prophet eye can see
Far lands enkindled by thy borrowed ray,
Till realms of which thy great ones never heard
Walk in thy darkened light, obey thy voiceless word.

25.

“ Then who shall mourn thy ramparts crumbling low,
Thy havens now with tribute rich no more ?
Thou art unscathed, though each barbarian foe
Shall o'er thy ruins wake the battle's roar.
Let time and man thy temples overthrow,
And with their relics strew thy conquered shore,
Yet have I not thy mountains loved in vain ;
Where'er thy name is named, Athena still shall reign.”

E. A. F.

THE PARTING OF HECTOR AND ANDROMACHE.

THE following lines are not intended as a translation of the story of the parting of Hector and Andromache as told in Homer's Iliad. But all the details are closely taken from it; in some instances the thoughts have been suggested by it, and in a few others the expressions also have been adopted. It is hoped that it may serve in some degree, however faint, to show in an English form that which is perhaps the most touching portion of the greatest of all human poems.

1.

“LURE me not to tarry longer,
Helen of the golden wile,—
For thy words, as honey flowing,
Never can my heart beguile.
Yet one hour, and in the battle
Dardan and Achæan meet;
Thou mayst hear the tramp of warriors
Marching through each crowded street.

2.

“ Vain is all thy witching fondness,
Helen of the golden wile ;
I must hasten, ere the battle,
To my home a little while :
Yet before the strife awakens,
I must greet my bride again ;
For I know not whether living
I shall leave the battle plain.”

3.

From the golden halls of Paris,
Where the Spartan Helen lay,
To his home with eager longing
Hector sped upon his way.
Empty was the bridal chamber,
Desolate was bower and hall ;
And her loved and gentle accents
Gave not answer to his call.

4.

“ Tell me, maidens, to the temple
Hath she hastened hence to pray
That the might of dread Athena
Shield the Dardan in the fray ? ” —

“ Not unto Athena’s temple,
Soothly speaking, hath she gone ;
But to Ilion’s loftiest rampart
Went she at the early dawn.

5.

“ For she heard the sounds of warning
And the summons to the fight,
And they said the Trojan phalanx
Quailed before the Achæan might.”—
From his home, with dark foreboding,
Sped he forth to Ilion’s tower,
Whence was seen, spread out beneath them,
All the Argives’ leaguering power.

6.

Through the streets the suppliants hurried,
Thronging to Athena’s shrine,
That the Dardan in the battle
Might receive her aid divine.
All unheeding passed the warrior ;
Nought was there his glance to stay :
To the Scæan gate he hastened,
Whence they sally for the fray.

7.

There he gazed with eager glances,
Hector of the waving plume;
And his brow with care was wrinkled,
And his eye was dark with gloom.
But, anon, with flowing garment,
Lo ! a form he hath descried :
It is she, Eetion's daughter,—
It is she, his white-armed bride.

8.

Joyously she came towards him
With a quick and eager pace ;
Yet upon her sunny forehead
Lingered sorrow's darker trace.
Trembling at the trumpet's bidding
To Sigæum's battle-field,
Thus unto her lord she hasteth,
Hector of the brazen shield.

9.

Pale she comes with grief and watching,
While, behind, a maiden bears
In her arms her tender infant,
Solace sweet in all her cares.

With unconscious smile reposing,
Like some softly gleaming star,
Lay the darling of his father,
Mightiest of his race in war.

10.

Smiling fondly on the infant,
Never yet a word he spake:
But his bride looked on a moment,
And the mournful silence brake.
Raising then his hand she kissed it,
And she called him by his name;
But her voice had lost its gladness,
Though its music was the same.

11.

“ Thine own heart will work thy ruin,
For thou wilt not pity more
All thine infant’s voiceless pleading,
All my sorrow long and sore.
Thou wilt meet the sons of Hellas,
Thou wilt face the treacherous foe,—
If thou in the strife be smitten,
Better death should lay me low.

12.

“ Other hopes remain no longer ;
All I loved of old are dead :
By the hand of swift Achilles
Was my father’s life-blood shed.
Yet he robbed not lance or buckler,
But, all mailéd as he died,
On a funeral pyre he placed him,
With his good sword by his side.

13.

“ Round his grave the mountain maidens
Planted many a clustering pine,
Where he sleeps, the last and bravest
Of Cilicia’s kingly line.
All his sons, right brave and noble,
To Pelides fell a prey, —
Seven, to soothe the gods of Hellas,
Slaughtered in one bloody day.

14.

“ But the love of sire and brother,
Hector, I have found in thee :
What avails it, if I may not
Wake thy pity too for me ?

Stay on this embattled turret,
Leave me not amidst my woe, —
Surely thou wilt not forsake me
For the gathering strife below.

15.

“ Place thy hosts beside the fig-tree,
Where the shattered walls, they say,
Least can stay the Argive armies
When they thunder in the fray.
Ever there is fiercest onset, —
Ever there their numbers swell :
But from whom this counsel cometh, —
Heaven or man, — I cannot tell.”

16.

Gently then he spake, and softly,
Hector of the brazen shield :
“ Ev’n with thee I may not linger,
Shrinking from the battle-field, —
Not because my blood is fevered
With a quenchless thirst for fame,
For the sons of Danaus tremble
At the sound of Hector’s name.

17.

“ I have aye been first in battle,
As my father was, they tell :
But far other thoughts, and deeper,
Now within my bosom swell.
For the destined day is coming,
When the sacred walls of Troy,
Mid the crash of war, shall echo
To the foeman’s shout of joy.

18.

“ Yet not all Troy’s countless people
May receive my chiefest care ;
Not this day for aged Priam
Do I breathe my fondest prayer :
Nor for all my mother’s sorrow,
Is this bitterness of woe ;
Nor for all my gallant brethren
Who shall fall beneath the foe.

19.

“ Only now for thee, my loved one !
Is my grief thus great and sore,
For a weary lot awaits thee
When my mortal toil is o’er.

Soon shall murder, lust, and pillage,
Stalk through Ilion hand-in-hand,
And the Argive robber lead thee
Captive to the Apian land.

20.

“ There, for hard unpitying masters,
Thou wilt toil in menial guise,
While the thoughts of bliss departed
Call the teardrops to thine eyes.
And it may be they will ask thee,
‘ Where is all thine ancient fame,
When the sons of Danaus trembled
At the sound of Hector’s name ? ’

21.

“ All thy grief shall pass unheeded,
And thy thoughts will turn to me,
How of old my love did guard thee,
And thy heart was glad and free.
But within the grave’s dark chambers
Mine will be a dreamless sleep,
Where thy cry can never reach me,
And I ne’er shall see thee weep.”

22.

To the babe drew nigh the warrior,
Hector of the brazen crest ;
But he turn'd from him affrighted,
Nestling in his nurse's breast, —
For his father's form he knew not,
Mid the brazen armour's gleam,
Nodding plume and burnished helmet,
Blazing in the noonday beam.

23.

From his brow the warrior, smiling,
On the ground his helmet threw ;
And, as there it lay so glist'ning,
Then the child his father knew.
And he took that babe so tender,
Gazing soft with laughing eye,
Blessings rich for him entreating
From the Gods that dwell on high :

24.

“ Zeus ! and all ye powers immortal,
Guard my child from fraud and wrong,
That he rule o'er ancient Ilion,
Brave of soul, of purpose strong.

May they greet him ever mightier
In the battle than his sire,
And his deeds a holy gladness
In his mother's heart inspire ! ”

25.

In her arms he placed the infant ; —
Gently, and with tearful smile,
To her heaving breast she pressed him,
With a saddened heart the while.
Sadder still, as thickly coursing
To her eyes the teardrops came,
With a fond embrace he kissed her,
And he called her by her name.

26.

“ Let not now thy heart, my loved one,
Be too heavy with thy woe,
For until the destined moment
None shall ever lay me low.
But I now must bend me onward,
Though with thee I fain would dwell,
Lingering on the words of parting,
Ere I say the last farewell.”

27.

On his brow the helm is gleaming,
And the plume is waving high :
To her home his loved one wendeth,
Gazing back with straining eye,
If, amid the throng of warriors,
Hector's plume she yet may know ; —
All in vain,— her eyes are clouded,
Thick and fast the teardrops flow.

28.

Sad at heart she reached her dwelling,
And she called her maidens round :
All throughout those golden chambers,
Mirth and song no more resound.
But the voice of stifled anguish
Rises fitfully and low ;
And their eyes are dimmed with sorrow,
And their hearts weighed down by woe.

29.

Echoes long the sound of weeping
Through the chieftain's festal hall ;
All his trophies, hung around them,
Seem as tokens of his fall.

Well they deem he hath departed
To his latest battle-field,
Mightiest of the sons of Priam,
Hector of the brazen shield.

G. W. C.

OTHRYADES.

THE story of Othryades is familiar to every student of early Greek history. But as it appears from the statement of Herodotus, that part at least of the story was not told with absolute certainty in his time, the writer has had less scruple in deviating somewhat from his narrative. As told by him, out of the three hundred Argives and three hundred Spartans who were appointed to decide by battle a dispute between the two cities for the border territory of Thyrea, Othryades remained alone of the Spartans, and spoiled the enemy's dead, as here related; while two Argives, named Alcenor and Chromius, survived and went to Argos with tidings of victory. Afterwards, when parties came from both cities to the place of combat, each asserted the victory to belong to their own party; the Argives, because a greater number of them had survived; the Spartans, because their champion had kept possession of the field, and spoiled the Argive dead. A general battle ensued in which the Argives were worsted. The suicide of Othryades is mentioned by the historian as a report.

I.

THE Sun-God's orb hath sunk to rest
Beyond the western main,
While a lonely man is keeping watch
Upon a battle-plain;

There is a helmet on his brow,
A spear is in his hand,
He standeth like the sentinel
To guard a sleeping band.

2.

Right valiant men around him
Are gathered far and near,
But yet no voice of mortal man
May strike the warder's ear ;
There is no sound of revelry,
No sound of hymn nor prayer,
No sleeper draws his heavy breath
Beneath the midnight air.

3.

The hum of man is hushed below,
The heavens above are still,
And Zeus himself is taking rest
Upon his holy hill.
But the lonely man still keepeth watch,
Nor sound is in his ear,
Save the night-raven's flapping wings,
And the night-wolf's howl of fear.

4.

Two hosts upon that battle-plain
At dawn of day were set,
And he alone is living man
Of all that there had met.
The day is passed, the night hath come,
The work of death is done ;
He counteth over friend and foe,
Six hundred all save one.

5.

Three hundred men had Argos sent
To guard her ancient cause,
Three hundred came to do the hest
Of Sparta's holy laws.
But Argos hath no champion now,
The bloody game is done,
Othryades is left alone
To tell how Sparta won.

6.

Two hundred men and ninety-nine
All in their armour lie,
Smoothed down is every lifeless limb,
And closed each darkened eye ;

Three hundred men are heaped around,
With bodies stark and bare,
Their limbs have stiffened as they fell,
Unclosed their eyeballs glare.

7.

And in the midst his trophy
The lonely victor rears,
Three hundred Argive panoplies,
Three hundred Argive spears ;
He pours his lonely pæan,
To heaven he lifts his eyes,
And straight to Zeus the Saviour
He consecrates the prize.

8.

The rite is done, and once again
He walks through all the plain,
And once again of friend and foe
He counteth o'er the slain ;
A tear was in the Spartan's eye,
A sigh was on his breath,
As he saw his brethren lying there,
So beautiful in death.

9.

“ And I alone am living man,
Alone of friend and foe ;
I must not see the home again
Where these may never go ;
My fate was ever linked with theirs,
Let weal or woe betide,
Nor am I better man than they
Who battled at my side.”

10.

Straight from his belt the sword he drew,
His farewell prayer he prayed,
Firm in the earth he fixed the hilt,
He fell upon the blade.
So now two hosts are perished all,
The bloody game is done ;
But he left his trophy standing,
To tell how Sparta won.

E. A. F.

THE MEED OF HEROES.

THIS poem must be considered as a hymn sung in the worship of the warriors who fell at Marathon, and who received heroic honours. The last stanza would fix its supposed date to the time of the Peloponnesian war. The Pindaric allusions hardly need to be pointed out.

1.

AWAKE, ye sons of Marathon,
 Day yokes her golden car ;
 Her milk-white steeds are chasing
 The gloom of Night afar.
 The rosy-fingered Morning
 Hath lit the dark-blue wave,
 And pours her gentle brightness
 Upon the heroes' grave :
 The grave which is our altar,
 Where we this morn must pray,
 And to the fallen heroes
 Our richest offerings pay.

2.

Bring hither the dark victims
Unto the shades below;
Dig deep the trench around the tomb,
Where the dark blood may flow ;
And strike with glee the golden harp,
And sing their glorious deeds
Who vanquished on this blessed ground
The quiver-bearing Medes.
While still the blue *Aegean* keeps
The birth-place of the free ;
While Athens' triremes proudly float
Far o'er the vanquished sea ;
While still the Median bowman
Quakes at the Grecian spear ;
Still shall the fallen heroes
Be worshipped year by year.

3.

Soft sweeps the blue *Aegean*
Around the heroes' grave,
Soft sweeps the breeze of morning-land
Where rest the fallen brave ;
The mountains bend in homage,
The trees wave soft in awe,

Over their graves who perished
For freedom and for law.
But in the gloom of midnight,
When all beside is still,
Then doth the cry of battle
Float back from every hill ;
Then rise the shadowy warriors,
And meet again in fight :
But none may see their faces,
Nor harness gleaming bright.
Yet ever on the breezes
The shouts of war are borne ;
The clashing of their weapons,
The blast of flute and horn,
The clang of shivering harness,
The neigh of gallant steeds ;
As meet the Grecian spearmen
And quiver-bearing Medes.

4.

Look to yon two fair pillars
That crown the grassy mound,
Carved with their names whose purple blood
Hath dyed this holy ground ;

One for the sons of Athens,
One for each true ally,
Who dared for faith and freedom
In glorious fight to die.
There sleeps Callimachus the brave,
The chieftain of the fray,
And Cynægeirus, whose right hand
The foeman lopped away.
And he too of the ploughshare
Dwelleth in glory here,
The hero Echetlæus,
Whom we worship year by year:
He came amid the battle,
He came against the foe,
And with his wondrous ploughshare
Laid many a stranger low.
But none before the battle
E'er marked that warrior's mien;
And when the fight was over,
He never more was seen;
And Pytho's prophet bade us
To give him feast and prayer,
And deem him last of heroes
Who deathless worship share.

5.

But while ye bend in homage,
To greet the fallen brave,
Think not their dauntless spirits sleep
Within the voiceless grave.
Their bones below are mouldering,
Their shadows flit around,
But a happier home than we may tell
Their holy souls have found.
Far, far beyond the western hills,
Where sinks the Sun-God's car ;
Beyond Hesperia's laughing plains,
And Atlas frowning far ;
Beyond the stream of Ocean,
Fast by his farther shore,
Their spirits dwell for ever,
And sorrow taste no more.

6.

For ever and for ever,
In bliss that passeth song,
The spirits of the blessed
Lead the fair hours along.

Theirs is no gloomy midnight,
Theirs is no noon-tide blaze ;
But the Sun-God, ever shining,
Glads them with gentle rays.
No winter binds their rivers,
No summer blasts their fields,
But one fair spring for ever
Each choicest floweret yields.
Not such as here we gather,
Which wither and which fade,
But gleaming rich with golden light,
In groves of sacred shade.
Beneath their feet, like velvet,
The softest grass they tread,
And all around the foot-path
The golden flowers are spread.
And, culling choicest beauties,
The happy spirits there
Wreathe garlands gilt with brightest sheen
Around their flowing hair.
They labour not for ever,
Nor stem the tide of fight ;
They pass not o'er the wine-dark seas,
Nor mountains' weary height.

7.

For ever and for ever,
 In bliss we may not tell,
By Father Cronus' hoary tower
 The happy spirits dwell.
Fast by the stream of Ocean
 They mark the passing tide,
But reck not of the deeds men work
 Upon its eastern side.
The Gods in all their glory
 Each morn and eve they see :
They bring no bleeding victims,
 Nor offerings such as we ;
But with a holy pæan,
 Of calm and gentle sound,
They hail the Lord of Thunder,
 And him that shakes the ground.
And the pure God Apollo
 Deigns oft with them to dwell,
And blue-eyed Athenæa
 Doth heavenly wisdom tell.
They never quake at Hades,
 Nor dread Erinnyses near,
For their blest souls are sinless,
 And no avenger fear.

8.

For ever and for ever,
In calm and holy joy,
There dwell the fallen heroes
Who fought at Thebes and Troy.
There dwell the bards who sang of old
Of all their deeds of might,
Orpheus and godlike Homer,
No longer lost to sight.
Full oft he strikes his golden lyre,
And tells of Ilion's day,
How Dardan and Achæan
Were matched in deadly fray.
Then flock the chiefs around him
To hearken to his song,
Achæan matched with Dardan,
But not in warlike throng.
The swift-footed Achilles
And Hector ever bold
Clasp their pure hands together
When they hear their fights of old.
And there, in holy wedlock,
She who at Aulis died,
Prize of the death she meekly bore,
Is now the hero's bride.

And Peleus eyes with gentle smile
His children's holy joy,
And deems their lot a fairer bliss
Than fame of conquered Troy.

9.

So dwell they on for ever
In bliss that knows no end,
To whom the Gods who dwell on high
Have granted there to wend.
Who dies for truth and freedom,
Who keeps his hands from wrong,
Who gives his people holy laws,
Who twines the wreath of song ;
These, in the happy island
By Ocean's western shore,
Reck not of earth's wild passions,
And fight and toil no more.
There dwells Aristogeiton,
And fair Harmodius too,
Who on Athena's festival
The hated tyrant slew.
And there they dwell for ever,
The prize of holy deeds,

Who vanquished on this blessed ground
The quiver-bearing Medes.

10.

But O ye powers that guard us,
To whom our prayers are bound,
The blue-eyed Athenæa,
And him that shakes the ground,
O hear us as we pray you
To look upon our land,
And ever o'er your temples
To stretch your guardian hand;
And raise us in the battle,
To grasp the Athenian spear,
Men like the fallen heroes
Whom we worship year by year.
Drive far away, we pray you,
From where your victims bleed,
The wasting sons of Dorus,
And the quiver-bearing Mede.
Let health and wealth for ever¹
Around us sweetly flow,
In a land that knows no master,
That sees no wasting foe.

So shall our children's children.
Your altars deck for aye,
And with voice of high thanksgiving
Their fathers' offerings pay.

E. A. F.

¹ ἀλλὰ παρόντες δώσομεν νῦν
αὐτοῖς, παισὶν, παιδῶν παισὶν,
πλουθυγείαν, εὐδαιμονίαν,
βίον, εἰρήνην, νεότητα, γέλω-
τα, χοροὺς, θαλίας.

AESCH. AV. 728.

THE PERSIANS AT DELPHI.

1.

“ KING Apollo, King Apollo,
Low we bend before thy throne :
How shall we defend our city,
And the hearth which is thine own ?
Fast through many a conquered province
Sweeps the might of Asia’s lord,
And full many a Grecian bondman
Follows him with hireling sword.
Macedon hath owned her master ;
Thessaly is bought and sold,
And Aleuad chiefs are serving
Where Achilles reigned of old.
Thebes beneath the despot’s banner
Gathers all Boeotia’s power ;
Argos crouches to her kinsman,
Brethren of the golden shower.
Who shall battle with the stranger ?
Who shall save us from his thrall ?

Sparta lingers at the Isthmus,
Athens keeps her wooden wall ;
King Leonidas hath fallen
(When shall braver rise than he ?)
With the true three hundred round him,
• All at dread Thermopylæ.
We are few and weak in battle,
But if we shall turn and fly,
Who shall guard the shrine of Delphi,
Where thy holy treasures lie ?”

2.

“ Men of Delphi, men of Delphi,
Hearken well to Heaven’s command ;
Let each breast that swells for combat
Fly from home and native land.
Let alone your hoary elders
Stand and wait Apollo’s will ;
When the Gods go forth to battle,
Man should tremble and be still.
Let the host by man unnumbered,
Let the proud barbarian come,
Let him wreak his fiercest anger
On Apollo’s sacred home ;

Cast away the spear and buckler,
Let no helmet woo the breeze ;
Stand in silence on the mountain,
Ye have better arms than these.
Though Aleuad chiefs be traitors,
Thessaly hath guardians still ;
Hath she not a mightier ruler
Throned on high Olympus' hill ?
Thebes hath reared the despot's banner ;
How shall she defend his throne,
When Platæa's fallen heroes
Wake to life on Marathon ?
Argos crouches to her kinsman ;
Hath she not an arm to save,
When she sees the twin Atreidæ
Rise in harness from the grave ?
Athens keeps her wooden rampart ;
Strong her succours shall be found ;
Strong is blue-eyed Athenæa,
Strong is he that shakes the ground.
Sparta lingers at the Isthmus —
Have ye not a helper here ?
Cannot Phœbus' arrows keep you
Better than the Dorian spear ?

He himself, the pure Apollo,
Dearest child of Zeus most high,
He shall guard the shrine of Delphi,
Where his holy treasures lie."

3.

From Apollo's golden tripod
Thus the maddened priestess sang ;
And the voice of high thanksgiving
Through the shrine of Delphi rang.
Youths and maidens, wives and children,
Marched in order to the hill ;
Sixty elders and the prophet
Stood to wait Apollo's will.
Soon Parnassus' peaks re-echoed
Blast of horn and tramp of steed,
As along the glens of Delphi
Swept the quiver-bearing Mede.
Proudly waved the royal banners,
Proudly did the turbans wave,
Sternly rattled every quiver,
Sternly flashed each crooked glaive.
There was triumph in each visage,
Triumph in each shout of pride,

As the host by man unnumbered
Swept along the mountain side.
Then the shades that ne'er had listened
To a Grecian buckler's clang,
Ne'er had heard a Grecian war-shout,
With barbaric echoes rang ;
Satraps urging on their warriors,
Warriors cheering at their word,
With the voice of many a language
That our fathers never heard.
Thus did six and forty nations
At their master's bidding come,
Primed to wreak his fiercest anger
On Apollo's sacred home ;
While, as through the pass they hasten,
To their stranger Gods they cry,
Well to sack the shrine of Delphi,
Where his holy treasures lie.

4.

Thus along the sacred valley
Sped the host in pomp and pride,
Till they reached the groves of laurel
Blooming by the temple side.

All was bright and all was silent
When the robber bands drew nigh ;
Not a sound was in the mountain,
Not a cloud was in the sky ;
Softly were the sun-beams playing
On the front of marble bright,
Which Alcmæon's sons had builded,
Banish'd for their country's right ;
Softly waved the groves of laurel,
When the cooling breeze swept by,
Softly trilled the sparkling waters
From the fount of Castaly.
Not a sound or sight of terror
Then the robbers heard or saw,
But the weird and solemn silence
Chill'd their boldest hearts with awe.
True they heard no shout of battle ;
True they saw no banner wave ;
On the earth and in the welkin
All was voiceless as the grave :
But, I ween, in all their thousands
Each had liefer seen by far
All the steel-clad lines of Sparta
Rushing onward to the war ;

For the peaks of high Parnassus,
Kindled in the flood of light,
Stood like groups of giant heroes,
Each with helmet gleaming bright ;
And without or voice or weapon,
Like the spirits of the hill,
Sixty elders and the prophet
Stood to wait Apollo's will ;
And, unmoved by hand of mortal,
Bright and burnished for the fray,
Close before the foremost pillars
All the holy weapons lay ;
Arms that Hercules had wielded
When he smote the Lord of Hell,
Arms that Theseus bore to battle
When the fair Amazons fell.
Then the spoilers quaked in horror,
And they knew that one on high
Guards full well the shrine of Delphi,
Where his holy treasures lie.

5.

Thus around the gleaming temple
All was fair and all was still ;

But the grasp of silent terror
Did their boldest spirits chill ;
Teeth are chattering, limbs are quaking,
Dropped are scimitar and bow,
Eyes are starting from their sockets,
Through the thousands of the foe.
Then a war-shout, such as never
Rose from earthly battle-field,
Like the roar of many waters,
From Athena's temple pealed ;
Then amid the heaving mountains
Loudest thunders echoed nigh,
And the ruddy bolts of vengeance
Flashed athwart the cloudless sky.
Earth was quaking to her centre,
Heaven was all a sheet of flame,
When the stroke of righteous judgment
On the haughty spoiler came.
Then the peaks of high Parnassus
Shivered at the tempest's blow,
Showered a thousand craggy ruins
On the guilty ones below.
Crushed beneath the falling mountains,
Stunned amid the thunder's din,

Scorched and blasted by the lightning,
Lay the robber in his sin.
Onward borne in one wild torrent,
Flying footman, flying steed,
All along the glens of Delphi
Swept the quiver-bearing Mede ;
Struck by Phœbus' arm of vengeance,
They had seen their bravest die,
All before the shrine of Delphi,
Where his holy treasures lie.

6.

Thus the mighty ones are flying,
Thus the proud are falling low ;
For the haughty shout of triumph,
Raise they now the shriek of woe.
Fast as through the glen they hasten,
Sword and shaft are strewed around ;
Dying men and dying horses
Sink in writhing on the ground.
Trampled is King Xerxes' banner
'Neath his standard-bearer's feet ;
And the vaunts too high for mortal
Have the guerdon that is meet.

Then there echoed through the mountain
Far and wide a wondrous cry :
“ When the Gods have won the battle,
Man may follow them that fly.”
Then, as fiercer flashed the lightning,
Louder still the thunders roared,
Every crag sent forth its warriors,
Every cave its ambush poured.
Earth was quaking to her centre,
Heaven was all a sheet of flame,
When upon the flying Persians
All the host of Delphi came.
There was neither spear nor buckler,
Not a helmet wooed the breeze ;
These are for the foe that struggles,
Weaker arms for him that flees.
There was club, and scythe, and ploughshare,
Sling, and crook that guards the fold ;
Save the elders grasped the weapons
That the heroes bore of old.
Elders smiting choicest warriors,
Footmen laying riders low,
Shepherds striking down the satraps
Who had led the haughty foe.

While, in front of the pursuers,
Straightway shone a wondrous sight,
Where two more than mortal warriors
Drove the foe to wilder flight.
They had spear, and they had buckler,
They had helmets waving high;
And whene'er the spear was lifted,
Straightway did a foeman die.
Faster fled the flying Persians,
When their wondrous foes they saw,
And the very sons of Delphi
Trembled as they gazed in awe.
But the hoary elders knew them
For the heroes of the land,
Who had come to fight for Delphi,
At Apollo's high command.
Phylacus, the strong in battle,
Raised his war-cry on the right;
On the left, the fierce Autonous
Onward pressed in deadly fight.
And we blessed the pure Apollo,
Who had sent them from on high,
To avenge the shrine of Delphi,
Where his holy treasures lie.

7.

Thus the Gods on high have trampled
Royal pride beneath their feet,
And the vaunts too high for mortal
Have the guerdon that is meet.
Thus the mighty ones are fallen
'Neath Apollo's vengeful hand,
Thus the weak return in triumph
With the spoils of many a land.
Rich and priceless was the treasure,
Guerdon of our days of fear,
Gathered from the wondrous battle
That was won without a tear.
There were arms and costly harness,
Gear of man and gear of steed,
Dropped in flight and torn in carnage
From the quiver-bearing Mede.
There were vests of silk and purple,
Gleaming deep with Tyrian dye;
There were plumes of spangled feathers,
Rent from turbans waving high;
Scimitars with jewelled handles,
Shields with rims of pearl bedight;
Lances budding with pomegranates
All of gold and silver bright.

And as joyously we rifled
Many a satrap's massy zone,
Scattered heaps of glittering dareics
All along the valley shone.
Rich and priceless was the treasure,
Guerdon of our hours of toil :
And we gave to King Apollo
Tithe of all the glittering spoil ;
And we hung around his altars
Relics of the haughty foe,
Who had come to spoil his temple
And to lay his altars low ;
And the voice of high thanksgiving
Did through all the shrine resound,
To the blue-eyed Athenæa,
And to him that shakes the ground,
And to him, the pure Apollo,
Dearest child of Zeus most high,
Who hath saved the shrine of Delphi,
Where his spoils of conquest lie.

THE FEAST OF ATTAGINUS.

1.

To the halls of Attaginus
Persia's best and bravest throng :
Gleams for them the lordly banquet,
Swells for them the tide of song.
'Tis the banquet of the Theban ;
He hath spread the festal board
For the chiefs who came to Hellas
In the train of Asia's lord.
They have seen both storm and sunshine,
Since they sojourned in the land ;
They have known the pride of triumph,
They have felt the vengeful hand.
What though dread Athena's temple
Smoulder in its ashes still,
And the wreck of ruthless pillage
Linger on the sacred hill ?
What though, in their frantic vengeance,
They that spared not man nor child,

Reckless of his slumbering thunders,
Have the home of Zeus defiled ?
Street and temple,—scathed and shattered
All Athena's city lies ;
From its ruins, thick and choking
Clouds of smoke and ashes rise :
None are there to mourn the ravage,
Gods and men have passed away :
Through the shrines of blessed heroes
Prowl at will the beasts of prey,
And the crash of falling rafters
Echoes on the sacred hill ;
And the thunderbolts of vengeance
Sleep within their caverns still.

2.

To the halls of Attaginus
With a brave array they throng,
Proud of step and high of bearing,
As they wend in pomp along.
But their eyes reveal no gladness ;
Gone is all their old disdain ;
With a false unwilling glory
Moves that lordly warrior train.

Are they thinking how the robber
In the vales of Delphi fell,
When a scared and weary remnant
Came the tale of wrath to tell,—
How the thunders burst upon them,
And their corpses lay around,
Scorched and blackened by the lightning,
Thick as leaves upon the ground?
Think not now on tales of terror,
Reck not now of vengeance dread:
'Mid the blaze of gold and jewels
Is the lordly banquet spread.

3.

In the halls of Attaginus,
While the joyous strains arise,
Feasts the Persian with the Theban,
Each with each, in friendly guise.
Fifty of the flower of Persia
To the banquet came that day;
Fifty Thebans with them feasting
On the golden couches lay.
There was song and mirth and jesting
Loud their godless vauntings grew,—

Vows of vengeance for their kinsmen,
Whom the Gods at Delphi slew.

4.

In the halls of Attaginus,
One alone of all the throng
Silent sate the while, disdaining
Reckless jest and laugh and song.
Fast they drained the jewelled goblets,
Louder grew their vauntings high ;
And the flush of godless daring
Lit anew each restless eye.
One alone of all, deep pondering,
Listened to each careless word :
Well he deemed the Gods immortal
All their maddened boastings heard.
And when song and laugh grew loudest,
To his fellow-guest he said, —
“ Stranger, dost thou watch the revel ?
Bravely is the banquet spread.
Golden cups unnumbered blazing, —
Jewelled flagons sparkling bright, —
Well I ween, than this, O Stranger,
I have seen no braver sight.

Fifty of the chiefs of Persia
In the Theban's hall recline,
And in pride of strength and daring
Gaily quaff the golden wine.
Soon these brave and lordly warriors,
Who this day hold revel high,
By the Gods that watch o'er Hellas
Smitten down in death shall lie.”
E'en as thus he spake, the Persian
Wept for all the coming woe,
When the sons of Greece should quite them
Wrong for wrong, and blow for blow.
“ Wherefore not this day, O Persian,
To Mardonius bear thy tale,
While against the rising tempest
Forethought wise may yet avail ?”
“ Stranger, to the doomed all fruitless
'Tis to tell of coming ill :
Pride hath brought its goodly guerdon,
Blinded eye and reckless will.
They, whom Heaven hath marked for ruin,
Heed not warning voice or sign,
Which to all save these are telling
Of the wrath of Zeus divine.”

5.

In the halls of Attaginus
 Echoes laugh, and jest, and song,
While the Theban and the Persian
 Still the lordly feast prolong.
None did hear the words of warning :
 Louder yet their vauntings grew,
Vows of vengeance for their kinsmen,
 Whom the Gods at Delphi slew.

G. W. C.

A LEGEND OF THERMOPYLÆ.

THE following narration is supposed to come from one of the few Athenians who were averse to the war with Sparta. These would be the old men, who knew most fully the strength and powers of endurance on both sides, and who may themselves have fought their first battles towards the close of the Persian war, as from the battle of Plataea to the commencement of the Peloponnesian war there had elapsed an interval of not more than fifty years.

1.

MEN of Athens, ye have spoken ;
“ War with Sparta ” is the cry :
Ye are brave, and strong, and youthful,
And your hearts with hope beat high,
As ye see the countless tokens,
And the hurrying to and fro
Of the bands of gathering warriors
For the struggle with the foe.
Men of Athens, ye will revel
On the purple battle-field,
Ye shall test the tempered lances,
Ye shall prove the well-wrought shield.

Time hath been when they were proven
In a just and holy fight,
When with us the blessed heroes
Came to battle for the right.
Sons of Ion and of Dorus,
Hand in hand, and side by side,
Nobly, in a righteous quarrel,
For the weal of Hellas died.
Sons of Ion and of Dorus
Soon will join in strife again,
Each to shed with reckless slaughter
Kindred blood upon the plain.

2.

Men of Athens, ye are joyful,
As ye see the proud array,
Shield and buckler, spear and helmet,
Ready for the fiery fray.
And ye say, “Athena’s city
O’er the Dorian race shall reign ;
We will match our fathers’ glory,
Else it all were won in vain.”
And ye deem the foe is haughty,
Who this homage scorns to yield ;

Therefore ye will try the issue
On the stricken battle-field.
Men of Athens, men of Athens,
I have seen your fathers fight;
Well I ween these eyes have never
Looked upon a nobler sight.
They were brave, and young, and hopeful,
Clean of heart, and pure of hand,
Battling with a hope unshaken
For the old Hellenic land.
Men of Athens, young and daring,
Listen to an old man's tale,
Though the pleadings of the aged
Scarce may with the young avail.

3.

Fifty years,—what wondrous changes
Hath the land of Theseus seen —
None of all this pomp and glory
Decked the olden streets, I ween.
Fifty years,—and from her ashes
Athens has upsprung once more ;
Scarce I know the very regions
Where we dwelt in days of yore.

Marble halls and sculptured temples
With a thousand hues bedight,
And the strength of broad Peiræus,—
Sooth they are a wondrous sight.
Fifty years,—and lust and ravage
Feasted richly in the land,
War and Plague o'er hill and valley
Stalked in mockery hand in hand.
Every day the smoke of temples
Burning choked the darkened air,
And it seemed the Gods immortal
Cared no more to hear our prayer.
Boding woe, the sacred serpents
Fled from out Athena's shrine ;
Burned no more the hallowed embers
On the hearth of Zeus divine.
Where was room for hope and courage,
When we saw the countless foe
Sweep, as flies the fiery plague-blast,
Winged with fear, and death, and woe ?
Day and night the spoiler ravaged ;
Yet of vengeance came no sign
From the home of dread Athena
And the hearth of Zeus divine.

Fifty years, O men of Athens,
And your sires took counsel here :
Not a coward word was spoken
In the hour of mortal fear.
Still I think I see their faces,—
Reverend men of hoary hair,
Men who know no craven shrinkings,
Though all meaner hearts despair.
They were days of deathless glory : —
Spear may pierce, and sword may strike,
Hearts be bold, and hopes unshaken,
Ye can never know the like.
Ye, so fair, and brave, and youthful,
Strong of heart and bold of brow,
With a cause unblest, shall never
See another Pylæ now.

4.

Men of Athens, I beheld them
Wending to Thermopylæ,
Bravest of the sons of Sparta,
Strong as human hearts may be.
Countless times within those gorges
I have wandered since that day,

Where are laid in sleep the heroes
Who at Pylæ passed away.
I have sought each winding valley,
As to me the tale was told,
Tangled cleft, and craggy summit,
Where the Phocian watched of old.

5.

Well they knew Apollo's answer
Came not unto them in vain,
That the blasts of heaven should aid them
While they fought on battle-plain.
So they prayed the viewless helpers,
And the vengeful winds arose ;
Boreas and Oreithyia
Dealt their wrath upon their foes.
Countless ships, with hosts unnumbered,
Helpless in the tempest's roar,
Tossed above the boiling surges,
Brake in pieces on the shore.
And the dwellers of Magnesia
Reaped rich harvest many a day ;
Wealth untold full long lay floating
'Mid the rocks that gird the bay.

Jewelled cups and golden goblets
 Sparkled on the barren strand :
Broidered zones and gemmed tiaras
 Lay as refuse on the sand.
Such the aid Apollo rendered
 While, in Pylæ's inmost dell,
By his place of hallowed council,
 One by one the Spartans fell.
Day by day the strife waxed fiercer,
 And the baffled Persian fled :
Day by day the Median archers
 Left a heap of nameless dead.
Quailed the heart of Asia's despot,
 As each lashed and driven slave,
Whom he sent to bind the Spartan,
 Found within the gorge his grave.
From his throne he leaped in anguish,
 As he watched the fight below ;
Persian lance and Median arrow
 Fell in vain upon the foe.
Day by day the strife grew hotter,
 But the foe was dauntless still ;
And the Persian writhed in fury,
 That the Gods should thwart his will.

Lure and goad and lash were fruitless :
Fraud alone may win the day,
And the Mede by traitor's guidance
O'er the mountain find his way.

6.

There the Phocians kept their watches
Through the silent hours of night,
While the sons of men were sleeping,
And the stars were glittering bright.
With a soft and lulling murmur,
Trickled down the mountain rills :
In the distance dim and shadowy,
Rose the vast Ætean hills.
High upon the mountain summit,
Silent watched that little band :
Far beneath the lazy ripples
Sunk to slumber on the strand.
And the withered leaves of autumn,
Sere and yellow, clogged the ground ;
There was not a breath to stir them,
As they lay so thick around.
Faint the streak of early morning
Spread behind Eubœa's isle,

As on leafy Anopæa
Watched the Phocian guards the while.
Through the darkness upward stealing,
Brighter yet the sunbeams played,
When they heard the sound of footsteps
By the rustling leaves betrayed.
Then the foe, with might resistless,
Hurried to the pass below ;
So the strength of open daring
Sinks beneath a traitor's blow.
With no thought of hidden danger
Paced the Spartan watch his round,
While, unseen, the Median archers
Down the hill in silence wound.
But the seer that read the omens
Told them that the end drew nigh,
“ When the morning sun is risen,
They who stay must fight and die.”
Then unmoved stood Sparta's heroes ;
All save these were sent away ;
And the remnant decked them bravely
As was meet for festal day.
And as victims for the altar,
There were traitors standing by,

Where the Spartan and the Thespian
Dared to tarry and to die.
Cowering shrunk the dastard Thebans,
Faint of limb and false of heart ;
In the pains of mortal conflict,
They with them must bear their part.

7.

Men of Athens, men of Athens,
Though so oft this tale is told,
It hath never lost its freshness,
And its glories wax not old.
With the sons of those who battling
In the pass of Pylæ fell,
If ye now may meet as foemen,
This ye deem will please you well.
Still within the dells of Pylæ
Mossy green the stones remain,
Telling where the Spartan heroes
By the Median shafts were slain.
I have read the wondrous legend
Many a time with quivering eye,
“ Tell the Spartans, at their bidding,
Stranger, here in death we lie.”

Men of Athens, men of Athens,
'Tis a phantom false ye seek :
Thus from out their voiceless dwellings
Still your fathers' memories speak.
Scorn not now the words of warning ;
Think, before the strife begin,
Ye must have a cause as holy,
If ye seek their fame to win.
Sons of Ion and of Dorus,
Ye should meet as kith and friends,
Basking in the light unfading,
Which their deathless glory lends.
Sons of Ion and of Dorus,
Still of you a boon they claim,
That ye keep their league unbroken,
As in time of ancient fame.
O those days of noble heroes —
Spear may pierce, and sword may strike,
Hearts be bold, and hopes unshaken,
Ye can never know the like.
Ye, so fair, and brave, and youthful,
Strong of heart and bold of brow,
With a cause unblest, shall never
See another Pylæ now.

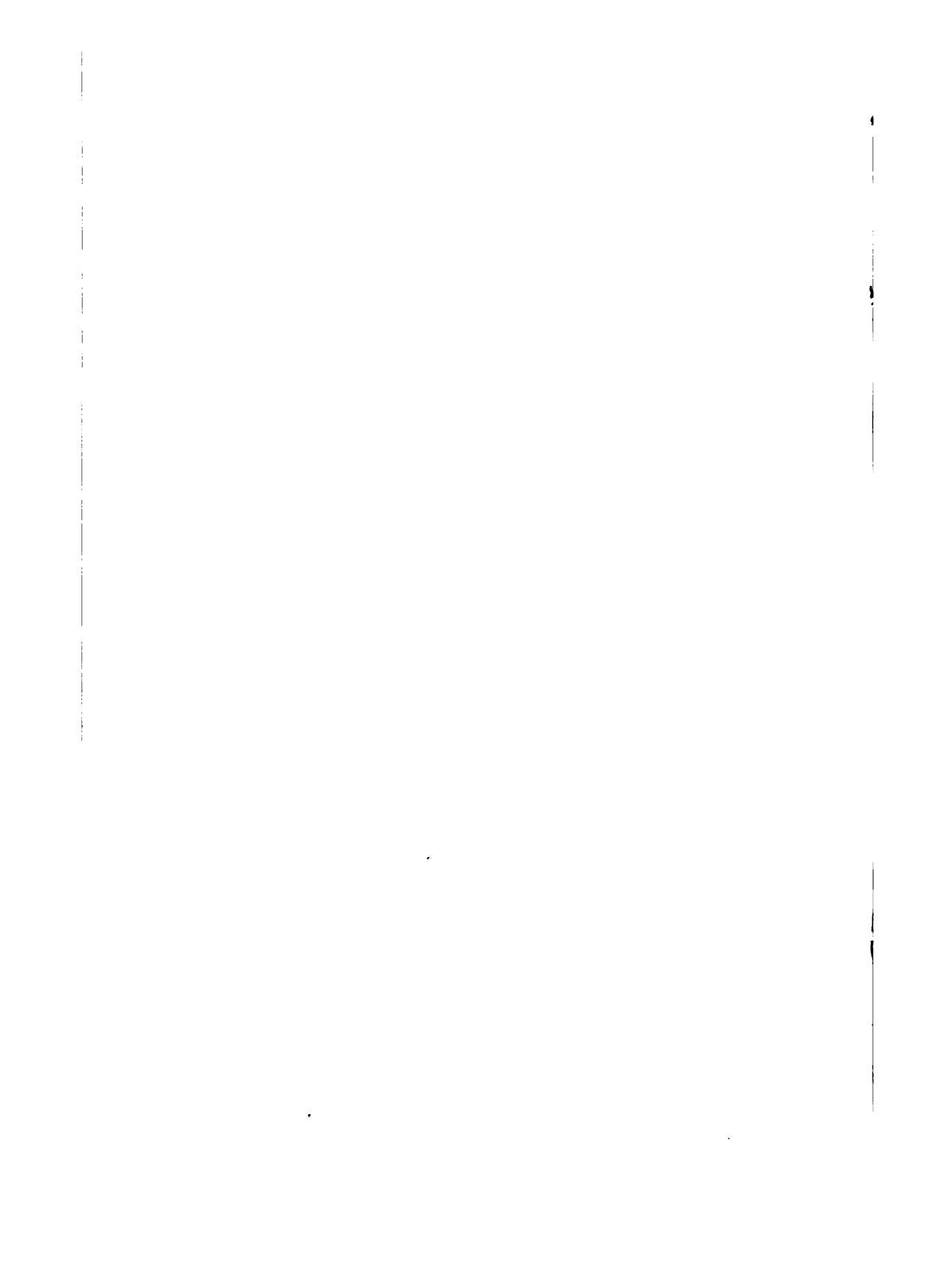


SONGS OF THE MOORISH WARS.



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SONGS OF THE MOORISH WARS.

THE BATTLE OF CALPE.

THE battle of Calpe (Gibel Taric, or Gibraltar), which immediately preceded that of Xeres or the Guadalate, was fought between the Arabs under Taric ben Zeyad, and the Christians of Spain under the Prince Ataulpho, assisted by Theodomir, or Tadmir, as he was called by the Moors of a later age. The death of the former took place as recorded in the following ballad.—See Irving's Legends of the Conquest of Spain, p. 110.

1.

IT was the thick of battle ;
And fierce they strove amain,—
The Christian with the infidel,
For freedom and for Spain.
IT was the thick of battle ;
And louder the war-cries rung,
While o'er them, dun and drear, the cloud
Of mortal conflict hung.

2.

And from the field a little space
A streamlet trickled clear,
And, brawling o'er its rocky bed,
Made music to the ear.
Above its source, a lonely palm
Spread out its pleasant shade,
While softly down its pebbly course
The sparkling waters strayed.

3.

And thither, from the bloody strife,
A noble chief was borne,
Who all the Gothic chivalry
To battle led that morn.
They bare him sadly from the field,
Two faithful friends and true ;
And ever, as on him they gazed,
Their tears flowed forth anew.

4.

They bare him to that mountain stream,
They bathed his face so pale ;
They strove to stanch the bleeding wounds,
If aught may yet avail.

They washed the blood and dust away,
And laid his armour near,
And idle on the sunny turf
Lay morion, shield, and spear.

5.

They watched him fondly there and long,
With soft and loving care,—
That ancient warrior stern and grim,—
That page so young and fair.
The page upheld his drooping head ;
His tears flowed thick and fast,—
So still he lay, nor heeded more
The trumpet's maddening blast.

6.

They watched,—the aged and the young,
Beneath the noon tide ray ;
And well they deemed the stream of life
Was ebbing fast away.
But once again his eyes unclosed ;
He gently raised his head ;
“ How fares the battle, comrade true ? ”
In feeble tone he said.

7.

“ The death-shafts fly more thick and fast,
The warfare fiercer grows,
God help us ;—we may conquer yet
Before the evening close.”
Then faintly flushed his cheek so wan ;
A hope lit up his eye,
That he might see the Moslem hosts
All vanquished, ere he die.

8.

“ O raise me on my knees again,
My mortal strife is done ;
Yet would I kneel in prayer once more
Beneath the noon-day sun.”
They raised him up upon his knees,
And gently held him there,
While that brave knight, with claspéd hands,
Poured forth his dying prayer.

9.

And when his strength began to fail,
All feebly then he cried,
“ I pray thee, ancient comrade,
Come, place thee by my side.”

Then, kneeling to that aged man,
His dying shrift he told ;
For none was there, or priest, or friar,
None save that warrior old.

10.

And looking then, where still the Goth
With Taric strove amain,
With filmy eye and quivering frame
He sunk to earth again :
And fondly then one dying kiss
He pressed upon the soil ;
And in that mute and sad embrace
He passed from mortal toil.

11.

And o'er him watched that youthful page,
That warrior stern and grim ;
But never more their lord shall reck
The tears they shed for him.
For there beside the trickling stream,
Beneath the noon-day sun,
In the lone palm-tree's pleasant shade,
His place of rest he won.

G. W. C.

THE DEATH OF RAMIRO.

WHEN the Christian army under Don Roderick was about to march for that fatal plain, where the Gothic dynasty of Spain was extinguished, and the Moslem conquest of that country in the main achieved, “The king called to him a noble cavalier named Ramiro, and, delivering him the royal standard, charged him to guard it well for the honour of Spain. Scarcely, however, had the good knight received it in his hand, when he fell dead from his horse, and the staff of the standard was broken in twain. Many who were present looked upon this as an evil omen, and counselled the king not to set forward on his march that day ; but, disregarding all auguries and portents, he ordered the royal banner to be put upon a lance, and gave it in charge of another standard-bearer, and departed at the head of his host to seek the enemy.”—See Legends of the Conquest of Spain, p. 119.

1.

FROM Calpe to Cordova
The news of battle flew ;
And every day more woeful
The dismal tidings grew.

From Calpe to Cordova
Each face waxed wan and pale :
And from cottage and from palace
Burst forth a mournful wail.

2.

From Calpe to Cordova
They sorrowed for the dead ;
Of Gothic blood the noblest
'Neath Calpe's rock was shed.
From Calpe to Cordova
Pealed forth the wild alarm,
“Come forth, ye Gothic chieftains,
For Spain and freedom arm.”

3.

From palace and from cottage,
From fortress and from fold,
Came the noble and the peasant,
The youthful and the old.
From mountain and from valley,
As passed the word along,
Came gallant knight and horseman,
And the vassals' countless throng.

4.

Anon within Cordova
The Gothic warriors meet,
With plumes and flashing lances,
In palace, square, and street ;

And at their head Rodrigo,
In royal pomp and state,
Against the foul invader
Rides proudly from the gate.

5.

And marshalled 'neath their banners,
All burning for the fray,
With the valour of their fathers
Came the Gothic host that day.
And dimly in the distance
'Neath Calpe's beetling height,
Where camped the accurséd Moslem,
They spied their tents so white.

6.

And all the plain of Xeres
Lay smiling fair between,
With palm trees and with vineyards
And olive gardens green.
And through that sunny region,
As all in peace it slept,
The joyous Guadalate
In silvery windings swept.

7.

There, on the eve of battle,
Where the happy waters played
Amid the vines of Xeres,
The Gothic host was stayed.
Then forth stept King Rodrigo,
With bright and kindling eye,
And took the Gothic standard
And raised it up on high.

8.

And forthwith every warrior
Did clasp his comrade's hand,
In vow to die, or vanquish
The Moslem's noisome band ;
And as they clasped each other
In token fast and dear,
Out spake the King Rodrigo,
That all around might hear.

9.

“ To thee, good Knight Ramiro,
Right loyal heart and true,
I yield the Gothic standard
To win us fame anew.

'Gainst unbelieving Moslem
And fouler renegade,
Though traitor hearts surround thee,
Defend it undismayed.

10.

" Before this host I charge thee,
Thou noble knight, once more,
Ne'er lay thou down this standard
Until the strife be o'er.
So guard it well, Ramiro,
With all thy heart and power,
Though thou be sad or hopeful,
Or in thy dying hour."

11.

And ev'n as spake Rodrigo,
With eager hand and eye
Ramiro took the standard
In hope and longing high.
A moment yet he held it,
And then to earth he fell;
But the thoughts that burned within him
No word of his might tell.

12.

Across his face one moment
A smile of gladness passed ;
Then o'er his eyes all dimly
The death-film gathered fast.
One moment brief he held it,—
He held it, and he died ;
And pale waxed every warrior
As that strange sight he eyed.

13.

They gazed upon the standard,—
With shattered shaft it lay :
They gazed upon the warrior,
Whose soul had passed away,—
In sad and boding anguish
For the issue of the fray,
When they battle with the Moslem
Upon the coming day.

14.

They lifted up the standard
With staff all rent in twain ;
Then gazed upon Ramiro,
So stiff and stark, again ;

And they deemed that on the morrow
The Goth should fight in vain,
And the godless Paynim triumph
In the Christian land of Spain.

G. W. C.

THE TOMB OF DON RODERICK.

AFTER the battle of Xeres, the same legends sprang up respecting the fate of Roderick, as in our own land were given forth about Harold after the fight at Hastings. Towards the end of the ninth century, in the city of Visco in Lusitania, (wrested by Don Alphonso the Great, King of Leon, from the Moslem,) there was found in a field outside the walls a small chapel, and near it, a tomb bearing the following inscription,

“ Hic Requiescit Rodericus Ultimus Rex Gothorum.”

— See *Legends of the Conquest of Spain*, p. 156.

ON Xeres, when the shadows closed
 O'er weltering heaps of countless slain,
 Full many a valiant knight repos'd
 From wearying strife and pain.

And foe with foe, that woeful night,
 Still locked in deadliest hatred slept ;
 While o'er that scene of ruthless fight
 The night breeze sorrowing swept.

But whether in that fierce affray
'Mid meaner foes Rodrigo fell,
Or lived to see a later day,
No mortal tongue may tell.

All wildly gasping and dismayed
His war-horse scoured the cumbered plain,
And through the gathering mist and shade
Its rider sought in vain.

And long (so hope deceives) they deemed
That Roderick had not perished then ;
And at the destined hour they dreamed
He yet would come again, —

To wreak a vengeance passing thought
On traitor heart and recreant hand
For every woe their sin hath brought
Upon that hapless land.

Ev'n thus they deemed he dwelt afar,
Abiding still the destined hour
To lead the Christian hosts to war
With more than mortal power.

Long ages past, it so befel,
Scarce raised above the holy ground
Where stood a hermit's lowly cell,
A humble grave they found.

'Twas said that mossy mouldering stone
Shewed forth the place of Roderick's sleep,
Where o'er that spot so still and lone
The wild flowers loved to creep.

Where'er he lie, he resteth well
From onset fierce and fiery fray —
Whether in battle-strife he fell,
Or passed in peace away.

G. W. C.

THE LAMENT OF THE MOORS FOR LUCENA.

This battle of Lucena took place in one of those numerous forays which preceded the more important and prolonged operations of the war carried on by Ferdinand and Isabella against the Moors.

Early in the year 1484, the Christians had suffered some terrible disasters in the mountain passes of Malaga; and Boabdil, elated by the news, was induced to undertake another expedition by the arguments of Ali Atar, or Alatar, Alcayde of Loxa, and father of Morayma, the wife of the Moorish sovereign. The town of Lucena, on the frontiers of Ecija and Cordova, was pointed out as an especially favourable object of attack; and Boabdil, in the company of Alatar, whose age had almost numbered a hundred years, set out from Loxa at the head of a splendidly appointed armament; but the result of the expedition was the total defeat and most bloody slaughter of the Moorish forces, and the captivity of Boabdil himself.—See Washington Irving's Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada, ch. xiv.—xvii.

1.

“ WATCHMAN, far across the vega
Canst thou see the standards gleam ?
Canst thou hear the tramp of horsemen
'Mid the murmur of the stream ?

Seest thou yet their pennons glancing
Proudly in the midday sun ?
Dost thou hear their shouts of triumph
For the deeds that they have done ?
With the mien of conquering heroes
Comes not yet each gallant train,
Laden with their foemen's banners
And the trophies of the slain ? —
Long it seemis since armed for battle, —
Scarce could be more noble sight, —
Fondly sped with loving glances,
They departed for the fight.
Down the castled steep of Loxa,
Burning for the fiery fray,
Well I ween, with dauntless bearing
Wound the terrible array,
To the battle with the Christian
On the sunny fields of Spain,
Where full oft 'gainst Moslem falchion
Christian sword hath struck in vain. —
For the wrongs Alhama suffered
They had wreaked a vengeance dread ;
Christian blood flowed down in rivers
For each drop that they had shed, —

When amid the mountain gorges,
Struggling in the gulfs profound, .
Faint, and whelmed, and crushed, their bodies
Writhing clogged the bloody ground.
In the halls of Antequera
Shrieks of maddened anguish rose,
When their sun of pride and triumph
Sunk in blood at evening's close.
Fresh with all that fame and glory
As from Loxa's walls they went,
Eyes of love with wistful longing
Gazed from every battlement.
With the eager thrill of valour
Proudly glanced Boabdil's eye,
As he bared his sword for battle,
And his banner waved on high.
Brightly flashed the Zegris' lances,
And each heart beat high for war ; —
Where was room for dastard trembling
'Neath the eye of Alatar ?
Four-score years, in battle never
Fell his scimetar in vain ;
At each lightning stroke a foeman
Bit the dust upon the plain.
Watchman, far across the vega
Canst thou see their standards gleam ?

Seest thou not their far-off lances
 Flashing in the noon-day beam ?
Comes not yet the shout of triumph
 Echoing faintly in thine ear,
Like the rumbling of the thunder,
 Ere the tempest draw more near ?"

2.

Pricking o'er the sunny vega
 Lo ! a form he doth descry,
Hasteth he in joy or sorrow,
 Anguish dread, or triumph high ?
Rowel-deep his spurs are buried,—
 Struggles on the gasping steed,
As his gory flanks all goaded
 By the fiery rider bleed.
Quivers every vein and muscle,
 Starting from his seething neck ;—
Bloody drops of fiercest labour
 Ooze in every foamy fleck ;—
From the red and angry eyelid
 With a dim and filmy glaze
Feebly glares his eye, as faintly
 Still he strives his head to raise.

Nearer by the banks of Xenil
Speeds the warrior on his way,—
Shattered sword, and targe, and helmet
Dinted in the fiery fray.
On he came, that ghastly rider,
With the paleness of the dead,
Save where wounds all bare and gaping
Showed a streak of livid red.
Dust and blood befouled his armour ;
And he spurred more madly still,
While the steed with fearful gasping
Staggered headlong up the hill.
O'er his eye the death-film gathers ;
Thicker comes each panting breath,
Till before the gate he totters,
And his limbs are stayed in death.

3.

Then in dread and dark foreboding
Hurried forth the crowd to see
Wherefore came that ghastly rider,
And what might the tidings be.
O'er his gallant Arab charger
Leant the warrior mute and still :

Scarce he dared to tell his tidings,
For they were so full of ill.
“ Cavalier, thou bearest tokens
Of a fearful battle-field ;
Hath Granada’s standard conquered ?
Did the Christian flee or yield ?”
With a gesture mute and mournful
Straight he pointed with his hand
To the dark and stern sierra
Bounding in the Christian’s land.
“ There beyond those craggy summits
Stricken down in death they lie,
Gashed, and cleft, and hewn, and rotting
In the carnage heaped on high.”

4.

Then the hollow wail of anguish
And the shrieking of despair
And the frantic cries of terror
Rose commingling in the air.
Forth then stepped an aged warrior,
And he spake in accent low,
“ Cavalier, thy mien is mournful,
And thy words are full of woe ;—

Are they vanquished, victors ever
In the purple fields of war?
Surely ne'er such fate hath fallen
On the hosts of Alatar."

"Conqueror in a hundred battles,
Alatar is lowly laid,
Stricken down amid the slaughtered,
Cloven by a Christian's blade."

Far and wide the moan of warriors
Rose in stifled murmur round,
And the wail of woman's sorrow
Echoed with a shriller sound.

And throughout the halls of Loxa
Nought was heard but shrieks of woe,
For Granada's flower hath withered
And its glory lieth low.

5.

Then another steed they brought him,
And he sped upon his way,
Nor in all his fiery journey
Paused to slake his thirst that day.
Over mountain, plain, and valley,
Madly thundering on he passed,

As one flees in mortal anguish
From the deadly desert blast.
To Granada's royal city
With his tale of woe he flew ; —
And the watchmen mused in wonder,
As the horseman nearer drew.
Onward reeled the Arab courser,
Gasping from his furious flight, —
Like a phantom seemed the rider
From the regions of the night.
“ Cavalier, what tidings bring'st thou
From Lucena's battle-plain ?”
“ Ne'er upon Lucena's turrets
Moorish flag shall wave again.”
Then for fathers, husbands, brothers,
Hurriedly the questions rose ;
“ All are dead, — entombed in slaughter,
They are taking their repose.”
“ Foot to foot, in carnage wading,
Fell thy sire,” to one he said : —
“ In the thickest of the battle
Was thy brother's life-blood shed.” —
“ Struggling where the fight raged hottest
Was thy lover stricken down.” —

“ Hand to hand in mortal combat
Hath thy kinsman won renown.”—
“ Matchless in his deeds of valour,
Far beneath the waters deep
Of the dark and crimsoned Xenil
Thy betrothed is laid in sleep.”—
Each and all with bloodless faces
Heard the story of their woe,—
And the wail of sorrow echoed
Far and wide and high and low.
Sadly through Elvira’s portal
Passed the warrior on his way,
Dealing out the dismal tidings,
How each fared amidst the fray.
Through the Bivarrambla slowly
To Alhambra’s gate he drew,
For the carnage of the battle
Passed again beneath his view.
Gazing on the stream of Darro
Sadly watched Morayme there,
And she heard the cries of mourning
Break upon the breathless air.
There with haughty brow sate Ayxa,
Looking on the plain below,

When that grim and lonely warrior
Came to tell the tale of woe.
“Cavalier, how sped Boabdil?”
“All are dead upon the field :
Round their king they stood a rampart,
And their bodies were his shield.
Then the battle raged more fiercely,
And I saw the king no more ;
There were only dead and dying,
When the bloody strife was o'er.”

6.

Spake no word the noble Ayxa,
But she raised her hands on high ;
And a mother's silent anguish
Mantled in her piercing eye.
Out then gushed Morayma's sorrow
With a mighty burst of woe,
For the joy of life was faded,
And the flower of love lay low.
And the minstrels sought to cheer her,
But their song became a wail,
And their words of feeble solace
Told anew the woeful tale,—

For the accents of Boabdil
She could never hear again,
And the pride of all Granada
Lay upon the battle-plain.
Drearier swelled the wail of sorrow
Far and wide and high and low,
For the star of hope arose not
On that rayless night of woe.

G. W. C.

THE FALL OF GRANADA.

IN the war of races which was carried on in Spain in the fifteenth century, mingled with much that was base and unworthy, there was still exhibited much of true heroism and magnanimity,—qualities which indeed are more generally displayed in contests of this character than in any other. Towards the end of the war, as the arms of Ferdinand and Isabella became continually more and more successful, and the hope of final victory to which the Moors had so long clung was gradually abandoned for despair, many governors of towns and castles were induced to surrender the places entrusted to them, by the proffers not only of large sums of money to be paid immediately upon the ratification of the compact, but by promises of toleration and protection for the time to come. Compelled by the defection which was becoming more and more prevalent around him, Ali Aben Fahar, Alcayde of Purchena and Paterna, yielded up his authority to Ferdinand; but rejected indignantly all offers of personal remuneration, and prayed only for the lives and liberties of the people over whom he had been governor, and who could not tear themselves away from the land of their birth, rich with the recollections of former prosperity and grandeur, and endeared by the memory of happiness which their forefathers and themselves had there enjoyed. In Granada itself all was consternation, and every one counselled immediate surrender. The only voice that was lifted up against such a course was that of Muza ben Abil Gazan, and it was lifted up in vain. He departed from the palace of Alhambra in silent indignation, went home, and, issuing thence in full armour, rode through the streets of Granada, and, passing through the gate of Elvira, was never again seen or heard of. Boabdil himself soon after issued from his capital, never to re-enter it again; and he

made it his last request to his conqueror that none should be allowed hereafter to pass through the gate by which he himself departed, and the portal was immediately walled up in compliance with his request. See the Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada, chs lxxx. xcvi. and xcix.

THROUGH Granada near and far
Burst a mighty storm of war,
And the Christian, as he came,
Left a track of blood and flame.

Strength availed not : guarded well,
Leaguered tower and fortress fell ;
And the Moslem hosts in vain
Strove upon the battle-plain.

Then the slaughtered lay around,
Reeking on the cumbered ground ;
And the prowling beasts of prey
Feasted richly night and day.

And in place of gardens fair
Frowned a desert scorched and bare ;
Hill and vale, so rich of yore,
Smiled in beauty now no more.

Joyous song and roundelay
Cheered no more the close of day,
As with tinkling castanet
Merry groups of yore had met.

Youths and maidens now no more,
When their daily toils were o'er,
Listening to the light guitar,
Danced beneath the evening star;

While the softly murmuring rill
Trickled gently down the hill,
And the fountain plashing near
Made sweet music to the ear.

But beneath the lurid sky
Flames of conquest glared on high ;
And, prevailing more and more,
Boomed the cannon's deadly roar.

And the captive's hollow wail
Swelled anon upon the gale,—
And the shriek of mortal pain
From the bloody battle-plain.

And—a sad and piteous sight—
Morn and eve and noon and night,
Stricken in the fiery fray
Dead and dying mingled lay.

Then the throes of mortal fear
Seized on all both far and near ;
Every where was silence dread,
As the stillness of the dead.

None did counsel battle more,
For their day of hope was o'er ;
But they drooped with vacant stare
In the palsy of despair,—

As they watched their golden land
Sullied by the foeman's hand,
And beheld their fields afar
Scorched beneath the blast of war.

Then anon the heralds bring
Proffers from the Christian king ;
And the brave mid death and pain
Fell beneath the lust of gain.

“ Whoso yieldeth up,” they said,
“ Yet, ere further blood be shed,
Rock or castle, tower or hold,
Shall be recompensed with gold.”

One by one they took their way
To the leaguering camp each day,—
Noble knight and proud alcayde,—
For their hearts were sore afraid.

Then in low and humbled mood,
In the victor’s sight they stood ;
Each one meekly yielded there
Castled crag and fortress fair,—

From the broad and sunny plain
To the rugged mountain chain,
Where the Alpuxarras rear
Evermore their summits drear.

And forthwith in fitting meed
Guerdons rich repaid the deed ;
And of gifts most bright and fair
Each received a costly share.

Thus arrayed in winning smile,
Luring word and golden wile
In the hour of mortal fear
Deeper pierced than sword or spear.

One alone of all stood by
With a fierce and kindling eye :
And his lip was wreathed in scorn
For the shame he saw that morn.

Gloomily he stood apart,
Watching with a bursting heart
While, all shrinking and dismayed,
Each his plighted trust betrayed.

Then it needed he should say
Wherefore he had come that day ;
Sad at heart, that warrior bold
Briefly then his errand told :

“ Unto thee the keys I bring
Of my fortalice, O king ;
All the hearts I counted mine
Lust of gold hath rendered thine.”

Then they brought him for his share
Gifts exceeding rich and rare ;
But in wrath and high disdain
Brief reply he made again :

“ Not for lure of paltry gold
Leaguered tower by me is sold :
Look around thee ; thou may’st see
What hath brought me unto thee.

“ See with cringing mien they stand,
Perjured heart and dastard hand :
When the soul is locked in thrall,
Castle, fort, and tower must fall.”

Then the king in deep amaze
On him fixed an eager gaze :
“ Ere thou goest on thy way,
Ask of me a boon this day.”

So he said his people fain
In their homes would still remain
With the Moslem faith and name
As in time of ancient fame.

“ Cavalier, thy words are fair ;—
For thyself hast thou no prayer ?”
“ In the home I loved of yore
Now is all my sojourn o’er ;

“ Sick of soul and sad of heart,
Fain would I far hence depart,—
Though I bear a hidden woe
With me, wheresoe’er I go.”

“ Loyal heart and brave and true,
As thou prayest will I do ;—
And thy people aye shall dwell
In the homes they love so well.”

Lowly then he bowed his head,
But no words of thanks he said,
For the thoughts of former years
From him forced unwilling tears.

So he left that bright array,
Wending sadly on his way ;
And with fevered haste amain
Spurred his war-horse o’er the plain.

And anon a silver sail
Swelled beneath the gentle gale ;
And the bark, in gay career,
Stooped to kiss the waters clear.

Like a pale and waning star,
Gleamed the Crescent from afar :
So across the sea that day
Sped the Moor upon his way.

To Granada's monarch came
Tales of war, and blood, and flame ;
And he said, " All earthly sway
Like a vapour melts away."

When they heard those tidings drear,
Every heart was bowed with fear,
And awhile in silence still
Pondered on the tales of ill.

Then Boabdil saw each day
Terror only and dismay,
Craven heart and drooping eye,
As the Christian host drew nigh.

Through Alhambra's halls so fair
Rose the counsel of despair,
For all deemed the Moorish sway
Was for ever passed away.

Then a warning voice was heard ;
And awhile each heart was stirred,
While from Muza's lips there came
Words of scorn for thoughts of shame.

But the tyranny of fear
Warped the soul and dulled the ear ;
And their inmost heart was steeled
Freedom, wealth, and fame to yield,—

So beneath the star of peace
Might the deadly bale-fires cease,
And throughout the blooming plain
Mirth and song resound again.

Gleaming flashed from Muza's eye
Burning scorn and anger high,
As he painted all the woe
They should suffer from the foe ;—

Shouts of hate,— and searing pain,—
Wanton gibe and wild disdain,—
Galling fetters, durance vile,
Luring lie and deadly wile,—

Such the boon and guerdon fair
To requite the Moslem's prayer,
When unto the foe they yield
And the fatal scroll is sealed.

“ But I shall not see the day
When our name shall pass away ;
Recreant heart and perjured hand,—
These may dwell within the land.”

Silently he passed them by,
As they gazed with wondering eye,
And they heard his footsteps fall
Gloomily through court and hall.

To his home he went, and then
Donned his panoply again ;
Waving plume, and glistening blade,—
Nobly was the knight arrayed.

Then throughout the city street
Pacing on his war-horse fleet,
As in pomp of ancient fame,
To Elvira's gate he came.

Then the portal wide they threw,
As the horseman nearer drew ;
Lowly bowed each sentinel,
For they knew the warrior well.

Never word he spake, but straight
Hastened from the city gate,
And through all the sunny plain
Never turned to gaze again.

From that day and hour, I ween,
Never more was Muza seen ;
Never mortal man hath known
Whither went that warrior lone.

Then at last the hour of shame
To Granada's monarch came ;
And his sceptre passed away,
Like the mist at break of day.

For the gloomy pomp arrayed
Came the mournful cavalcade,
While the foe in haughty state
Paused before the city gate.

Then the Moor in sorrow there
All Granada's realm so fair
To the Christian king did yield,
And the solemn compact sealed.

Then Boabdil to his foe
Spake in bitterness of woe,
“ Through the gate I pass this day,
Let none other pass, I pray.”

Sullenly the portals close,
As the exile onward goes :
And of all that through them passed
Was that mournful train the last.

Then with stones they clogged the way
In a massy pile that day ; —
There full oft the tale they tell,
How the Moslem's glory fell.

Thus did cease the battle's roar,
And the fiery blast was o'er ;
And upon Granada's shore
Flashed the beacon-flames no more.

G. W. C.

THE REPROACH OF AYXA-LA-HORRA.

THE character of the mother of Boabdil el Zogoybi is well known. Endowed with a mind of masculine strength, while her virtues were such as to place her beyond the reach of slander or suspicion, she was enabled, herself, to escape the violence of her fierce husband, and to preserve her son from the effects of his capricious anger. While the last of the Moorish dynasty in Spain was upon the throne, her wisdom and resolution were the chief, if not the only, supports of a broken and tottering empire. To such a disposition the apathy and listlessness of her son would naturally appear the proximate cause of his proverbial ill-fortune, and it was under this feeling that, after the surrender of Granada, the bitterness of her sorrow displayed itself, as she exclaimed to her son, "Thou doest well to weep as a woman over what thou couldst not defend as a man." How far a more resolute and successful sovereign might have been the instrument of delaying the downfall of the Moslem rule in Spain, it is not needful here to decide; that it could have been the means of realising the high expectations of Ayxa-la-Horra, no one can for a moment imagine who knows the aspect at that time, and the relative bearings, of the conflicting races—in a contest of which manifestly the only end could be the utter and final overthrow of either the one or the other.

1.

THE hour of shame hath come at last,
 And thy sceptre passed away:
 And thou, so late a king, must leave
 Thy royal halls this day.

The pageant is preparing ;
And fast the Christians throng,
To mock thee in their furious hate,
When thou shalt pass along.

2.

I have seen this moment coming,
When all around seemed fair,
As sudden tempests gather
On the cloudless summer air ;
I saw it, for it needed not
A keen prophetic eye
To read the tokens of thy fall,
Ere yet the hour drew nigh.

3.

I warned thee of each darkening cloud,
As heavily it rose
The herald of a blacker storm,
The sign of fiercer woes.
I have warned thee at the early time,
In sad and boding strain ;
I have warned thee to the latest hour,
But my warning was in vain.

4.

I told thee of thy kingly sires,
 The mighty deeds of yore,
 The chivalry of lofty souls,
 That nerves our hearts no more.
 I pointed to each trophy,
 As they proudly hung around,
 The trophies of thy valiant sires
 With deathless glory crowned.

5.

But thine eye roved heedless o'er them ;
 And the tokens of thy fall
 Ne'er roused thee from thy lethargy
 To break the deadly thrall.
 Thou wouldst not hear my warning voice,
 For the sun shone bright to thee,
 And thou sawest not each little speck
 That read thy doom to me.

6.

Aye, the fatal spell was on thee,
 And its power bore down thy soul,
 As o'er the worn and shattered bark
 The wrathful waters roll.

The trumpet's note was heard for war,
But other tasks were thine,
Tasks that, perchance, more fitted thee,
Last of a mighty line.

7.

Dost thou know of love's sweet witchery ?
Hast thou felt the deadly chain,
Poor slave, without a passing care
For freedom once again,—
As its magic led thee onward
More blindly hour by hour
To barter for a bauble
The birthright of thy power ?

8.

Ha ! have I struck the note at last,
That through thy heart may thrill ?
Though dead to all beside, to love
It beats responsive still.
Nay, tell me not that mortal power
Could never stem the tide ;
If as a king thou could'st not live,
A king thou might'st have died.

9.

But my words are idly spoken ;
'Tis too late to heed them now,
For the crown thy mighty sires have worn
No longer decks thy brow.
Thy life hath been a dream ; the spell
Was on thee night and day ;
Thou hast waked thee but in time to see
Thine empire pass away.

10.

Yea : thou must leave these halls this day ;
But soon the deadening spell,
When the star of love shall rise again,
Will soothe thy sorrows well.
Thou wilt hear the Christian's shout of scorn,
Though my voice thou would'st not hear,
And break the chain that bound thy soul,
Ere yet this hour drew near.

11.

But our day of pride is over ;
At thy royal city's gate,
Impatient for thy quick approach,
Thy Christian conquerors wait.

It were fruitless now to ponder,
As the fleeting hours take wing,
That, hadst thou waked from out thy sleep,
Thou might'st have lived a king.

12.

But thy sceptre hath departed,
And the Moorish sway is o'er ;
And we leave Granada's golden land
For Afric's barren shore.
But thy name shall never perish,
And every age shall tell
How from the glory of his sires
The last Boabdil fell.

G. W. C.

EL ULTIMO SUSPIRO DEL MORO.

Few perhaps have read the account of the surrender of Granada to Ferdinand and Isabella without feeling their sympathies powerfully enlisted on behalf of the fallen Moorish monarch : for, over and above the interest which must ever attach to fallen greatness, there are many traits in the not very forcible character of Boabdil which we feel should have exempted him from the keen and bitter reproach of his mother, and which cannot fail of drawing towards him fully as many as they may repel.

The spot is still pointed out, whence, as he reached the summit of the hill which overlooks the Alhambra, Boabdil surveyed for the last time the scene of his former empire. The name also still accompanies the tradition ; and the Spanish peasant, as he guides the traveller, fails not to tell of "The last sigh of the Moor."

I.

THERE is a sound of hurrying feet,
 The gates are open wide :
 And there are thronging crowds to gaze,
 As forth the conquered ride.
 With looks of deadliest hate and scorn
 They mock the fallen foe,
 As from their gorgeous halls of pride
 The Moorish princes go.

2.

There is a sound of tramping steeds;
But they move not to the fight;
And there the mailed warriors come,
But not for war bedight.
They move in slow and stately pace,
Their lances brightly gleam,
Like the mountain-tops lit fitfully
By the setting sun's faint beam.

3.

They come unto the open gates,
The eager gazers throng
To look upon the once dread foes
That had trampled on them long.
And humbled here in dust shall be
Their eagle look of pride,
Ere further on their mournful way
The Moorish bands may ride.

4.

There cometh one of kingly mien,
The keys are in his hand,
As he goeth forth an exile
From fair Granada's land.

He yields them to the Christian king,
And slowly onward goes;
There is a sound of tramping steeds,
And the gates behind him close.

5.

They look not back ; their spears, held low,
Glance in the sunlight still ;
And their heads are all in silence bowed,
As they climb Alhambra's hill.
Sad thoughts are busy at their hearts,
As slowly on they ride,
And leave behind that golden land,
The garden of their pride.

6.

They have reached the summit of the hill,
And some are hid from sight ;
On others still all brightly gleams
The golden morning light.
Then to his long loved home returned
The Moorish monarch's gaze,
As glowing in the quivering mist
Its thousand turrets blaze.

7.

He looked upon the palaces . . .
Of his ancestral sway,
And the glory of a hundred kings
For ever passed away.
All calmly in that flood of light
Each minaret reposed;
And scarce it seemed to him that there
His own brief day was closed.

8.

He shed no tear, as long he gazed,
But one last sigh he drew
For the glad scenes of his early days,
As they passed beneath his view.
Sadly he breathed his last farewell,
As back his glances roam,
The last sigh of the Moorish king,
As he passeth from his home.

9.

“ The golden dream is over,
And the phantom colours fade;
Like the waking from a vision
Is my pride in ruins laid.

Thy towers, Alhambra, glisten still,
But they gleam no more for me :
I may bear me wheresoe'er I will,
So I come not back to thee.

10.

“ The world will rank me, well I know,
'Mid vile and hated things,—
Mean offspring of a noble race,
Last of a line of kings.
And the greatness of my fathers
Shall but degrade the last,
Like the glory of a cloudless sun
At evening overcast.

11.

“ They will sing of noble heroes
And the valiant deeds of old ;
And 'mid their kingly exploits
Shall Boabdil's shame be told.
Perchance they judge me rightly,
But I reck not what they deem :
I gaze upon my early home,
The palace of my dream.

12.

“ There are hearts will judge me kindly,
 There are hearts will love me yet;
 Though the sun that dawned upon my birth
 ‘Mid heavy clouds hath set.
 There are things I prized more highly
 Than monarch’s scept’red sway;
 And well I deem for fortune’s frown
 Love will not pass away.

13.

“ Thou hast loved me long, Morayma,
 Though the leaguered fortress fell:
 And, now my power hath passed away,
 Thou wilt love me still as well.
 I will bear thee to our southern clime
 Across the untamed sea,
 And, sad at heart for other days,
 Will borrow joy from thee.

14.

“ Farewell, I may not linger
 ‘Mid the scenes so loved of yore;
 Farewell, Alhambra’s soaring towers!
 I may not see them more.

The golden dream is over,
And the phantom colours fade ;
Last of a line of mighty kings,
Low is thy glory laid."

15.

'Tis past : that mournful train is gone ;
No more their armour gleams,
As faint, but now, and fitfully
It caught the morning beams.
As crept along each sleeping vale
The light of early day,
" The last sigh of the Moor" was breathed
For empire passed away.

16.

There is a sound of hurrying feet,
The tramp of steeds is heard :
Like billows on the heaving sea,
The gazing throng is stirred.
And loud the shout of hate and scorn
Is echoed o'er and o'er,
" In fair Alhambra's palaces
The Moslem dwells no more."

G. W. C.

**THE FIRST TE DEUM IN THE MOSQUE
OF GRANADA.**

THE surrender of Granada put an end to the Moslem dominion in Spain, after a period of nearly eight hundred years from the fall of Roderick the Goth. On the morning of the surrender, at the head of a splendid train, Ferdinand and Isabella set out from Santa Fé, the city which they had caused to be built in place of a camp during the siege. The most distinguished of the Spanish knights was Roderigo Ponce de Leon, Marquis Duke of Cadiz, not unworthy to be compared with his namesake the Cid Roderigo, or Ruy Diaz de Bivar, so illustrious for his successes against the Moors in the eleventh century. With him were other well-known names, as of Hernando del Pulgar,—“ he of the exploits,” as they were wont to call him,—the princely Duke of Medina Sidonia, the Master of Calatrava, the Marquis de Villena, Don Juan de Avila, Don Alonzo de Aguilar, and others scarcely less celebrated. As the cavalcade reached Armilla, a short distance from the city, the silver cross was seen elevated on the Torre de la Vela by Hernando de Talavera, Bishop of Avila, and besides it was placed the banner of the apostle St. James; and a great shout of triumph was raised by the whole army. The principal mosque of Granada was consecrated as a cathedral. The entry of Ferdinand and Isabella took place on the Feast of Epiphany, the day of kings, in the year 1492.

1.

POUR forth the hymn of triumph,
Ye Christian hosts of Spain;
Through all Granada's sunny clime
The Cross is reared again.

The night is past,— the morn is come,—
The Crescent wanes away ;
No more through all the land of Spain
Shall Moslem lord have sway.

2.

It was a blessed hour, I ween,
When the weary strife was done,
And once again the Holy Cross
Rose glittering in the sun.
On mosque and palace, tower and keep,
They hailed it from afar,
As glimmers on the brow of night
The silver morning star.

3.

It was a weary strife, ere yet
Lay trodden on the ground
The accursed sign that led the hosts
Of infidel Mahound,—
Ere yet the star, that sunk in blood
On Xeres' fatal plain,
Uprose from out the shrouding mists
To conquest once again.

4.

The morn is coming on the earth,
Its early splendours rest
In mantling hues of gold upon
Each far-off mountain crest.
And blent with every gorgeous tint
The dazzling light appears,
Where on the stern sierra sleep
The snows of countless years.

5.

And sparkling in their silver course
The Darro's waters flow,
Where smiles amid the orange groves
A happier clime below.
There sleep Granada's palace homes,
As imaged in a dream ;
While ruddy in the quivering air
Alhambra's turrets gleam.

6.

And like a storm-cloud stern and drear,
Beneath the morning ray
Seem telling of their wondrous birth
The walls of Santa Fé :

And from its vast and frowning gates
Pours forth a mighty throng,
'Mid clash of spears and lances,
As they slowly wind along.

7.

It is the Christian host of Spain;
The king is at their head:
He leadeth those in triumph
Whom he hath to battle led,
As, glancing in their panoplies,
They stretch across the plain,
(I ween it was a glorious sight,)
The chivalry of Spain.

8.

As all the chieftains of Castile
Come wending on their way,
And the princely lords of Aragon
In all their glad array,
And they who now in battle
Have reaped their first renown,
And they, who through a hundred fights,
Have worn the hero's crown.

9.

And far above the thronging hosts
 Rodrigo's form uprose,
 The boast of every loyal soul,
 The terror of his foes.
 Bright gleams the eye that never quailed
 Upon the battle-plain,
 And flashes still the sword that ne'er
 In battle smote in vain.

10.

And he of many an exploit,
 With bright untarnished name,
 The pride of all true knightly hearts,
 Hernando onward came.
 And with helm and shield and buckler
 All gleaming from afar,
 Rode Calatrava's mighty lord,
 The terrible in war.

11.

There went, renowned in countless fields,
 Medina's princely son :
 And Avila the matchless
 For the trophies he hath won.

And there Villena's morion
Is flashing like a star,
And the spear and crest and hauberk
Of the chief of Aguilar.

12.

On, on they wind, a glorious band,
Along the Darro's side,
With war-steeds tramping valiantly
And banners waving wide.
What meaneth now that deafening shout,
Deep as the billow's roar,
When the volume of its waters
Bursts wildly on the shore ?

13.

'Tis come, the dream of ages,
'Tis come, the blessed hour;
The Holy Cross now gleameth
On Granada's loftiest tower.
How gloriously it riseth
Upon the breathless air ;
And every heart in all that host
Beats tremulous in prayer.

14.

'Tis come, the dream of ages ;
 And they have not fought in vain,
 Who in the long and woeful strife
 Have swelled the heaps of slain ; —
 The youthful and the aged,
 The noble and the brave ; —
 Where'er they sleep, the Holy Cross
 Shall guard their hallowed grave.

15.

'Tis come, the dream of ages,
 Seen dimly from afar,
 The longing of thy heart of hearts,
 Ruy Diaz de Bivar.
 In faith of this glad triumph,
 When that heart did beat no more,
 Against the Moslem hosts thy steed
 Its ghastly burden bore ;

16.

For they placed thee stark and stiffened,
 Where thou wast wont to be,
 When the trumpet pealed the bidding
 To the battle's revelry.

And to thee, a voiceless conqueror,
Upon the stricken field
The living to the lifeless
In mortal fear did yield.

17.

And in faith of this high triumph,
Before Granada's gate
The wondrous walls of Santa Fé
Rose pitiless as fate,
That never should the battle cease
And ne'er the strife be done,
Till on Granada's towers the Cross
Should glitter in the sun.

18.

'Tis come, the dream of ages;
And the deafening shout arose,
And "Santiago" pealed the cry,
"The Cross hath quelled its foes."
Once more they wind, a glorious band,
Along the Darro's side,
With war-steeds tramping valiantly
And banners waving wide.

19.

'Tis come, the hope of ages,—
From the walls of Santa Fé
Still poureth forth a ceaseless stream,
Still winds the glad array.
And the sun is bright above them,
But no smile is spread around,
Where the wreck of war still lingers
On the scorched and gaping ground.

20.

The songs that echoed once from out
The orange-groves are still :
The vine no more with twining clasp
Clings fondly to the hill.
The citron blooms not in the vale,
Nor droops the nodding grain ;
For though the strife be over,
Its curse will yet remain.

21.

But soon the cypress and the palm
Shall clothe the land once more :
And songs from out the myrtle groves
Shall echo as of yore.

But never more the Moslem's hymn
Shall there be heard again,
And never more the crescent shine
Through all the land of Spain.

22.

And now within Granada's gates
That joyous train has passed :
And the Christian comes in triumph
To Alhambra's halls at last.
Not now before the Paynim mosque
Is gathered a Paynim throng,
But priests with cross and banner
Pass solemnly along.

23.

Within the pile, high over all,
The Cross its radiance flung ;
And the proud banner of St. James
In golden glory hung.
And all the fairest flowers of earth,
The treasures of the mine,
Were hallowed for the blessed rite
Before the blazing shrine.

24.

And now throughout that mighty pile
Each knightly warrior kneels,
While o'er them rising slowly
The mantling incense steals :
And as from out the veiling mist
The altar gleamed again,
Uprose the glad Te Deum,
Uprose the heavenly strain.

25.

And louder yet and louder
Rolled on the exulting song,
And arch on arch and dome on dome
Reechoed it along.
With gladdening strain, I ween, as high
The flashing censers swung,
Within the Moslem's place of prayer,
The blissful anthem rung.

26.

Not now it rose, as once before
Was heard the blessed strain,
Ere forth went King Rodrigo
To Xeres' fatal plain ;

While far beyond in whitening lines
The Paynim tents were seen,
And blooming as in mockery
Lay the battle-ground between.

27.

On many a knight right good and true
The sun uprise that day,
Whose soul amid that ghastly fight
Ere evening passed away.
And all the Gothic chivalry
That hailed the morn so proud,
Ere evening-tide lay weltering
Beneath a bloody shroud.

28.

Not now knelt King Fernando,
As Rodrigo knelt that morn,
While to his ear the hurried sounds
Of coming strife were borne ;
When the guilt of sins forgotten
Lay on him like a charm ;
And, all unfelt, a sleepless spell
Unnerved his iron arm.

29.

'Tis o'er, 'tis o'er ; full sad and long
The dreary night hath been :
But the shadows scare no longer,
When the morning star is seen.
All past, those weary ages,
All past the countless years ;
On mosque and tower the Christian host
Its holy standard rears.

30.

Within, rolled on the blessed strain ;
Without, the shout arose,
And " Santiago " swelled the cry
" The Cross hath quelled its foes."
And never more from thence, I ween,
That hallowed sign shall roam ;
The Christian comes to dwell for aye
Within the Moslem's home.

31.

It is the hour of triumph,
Ye Christian hosts of Spain ;
The Cross through all Granada
Is gleaming once again.

The night is past,—the morn is come—
The Crescent wanes away :
No more through all the land of Spain
Shall Moorish lord have sway.

32.

It is the hour of triumph ;
Yet louder raise the strain,
And shout for all your glory,
O chivalry of Spain !
For 'tis come,—the dream of ages ;
The Moslem's day is done ;
And on Granada's towers the Cross
Is glittering in the sun.

G. W. C.

A LEGEND OF THE ALHAMBRA.

The following legend is derived from Washington Irving's Tales of the Alhambra, where the incidents may be found under the stories of the three Moorish Princesses and the Rose of the Alhambra. The first and second parts of the legend are comprised under the former of these two tales; the latter narrates the mode in which the spell was broken, as in the third part.

The story may be shortly told as follows. During the long struggles between the Christian and Moslem powers in Spain, one of the Moorish kings had three daughters, whose affections were won by three Spanish captives, and an agreement made that after the liberation of the prisoners the princesses should fly with them to their own land. At the crisis, however, the youngest drew back, her timidity and affection for her father struggling with her desire to accompany her lover and embrace his faith. In punishment for this defection, she was after death compelled to haunt the scenes of her former life, until some one should break the spell by baptizing her into the faith which she had rejected while living. Ages passed away, and with them the Moorish rule in Spain; and in the days of the Emperor Charles V., a maiden, called from her beauty the Rose of the Alhambra, was wooed by one of the imperial pages, who, on the departure of Charles from Granada, accompanied his master, and apparently retained no remembrance of the promises which he had made. In sorrow of heart the maiden approached the fountain in the Alhambra, which was supposed to be especially haunted by the phantom of the unfortunate Moorish princess. The hours passed by unnoticed, and at midnight the spectre appeared and asked the cause of her distress. On hearing it she told her own tale, and prayed her to break the spell which bound her by sprinkling water upon her in the Holy Name. The maiden complied with her request, and the phantom vanished away, leaving at her feet a silver lyre, which was made the means of restoring to her the affections of her faithless lover.

PART I.

IF ever on the days of old
Thy thoughts with lingering fondness dwell,
Hear not with careless heart or cold,
The Legend of the Well.

Beneath Alhambra's crumbling wall
Still a pure fount of water plays
By day, and when the moonbeams fall,
As in the former days :—

When turbaned Moors with flashing spear
And scimetar upreared on high
The Crescent, and in mortal fear
The Christian's hope did lie.

But when again the Cross uprose
To consecrate that spot so fair,—
Gently as now its water flows,
That fountain murmured there.

And then the Christian maidens came
To where its silvery eddies play ;
Nor aught of fear their sense could frame,
Whene'er they came by day.

But those that hither drew, when night
Had dimmed the doubtful evening shade,—
Beneath the pale moon's quivering light
They saw a Moorish maid.

She rose from out that silver wave,
And raised her claspèd hands on high,
Like phantom from a lonely grave,
So coldly sad her eye.

A robe of white was round her thrown,
So thin,—so pure,—'twas light as air ;
Nor aught of human flesh and bone
Was in that form most fair.

And straight the Christian maids would fly
Through terror of that vision pale ;
And few would dare to venture nigh,
Scared by the fearful tale.

'Twas thus,—if e'er they lingered near,—
With claspèd hands she meekly prayed
That they would lend a listening ear
To her sad plaint for aid ;

And speak the words of hope and peace,
And on her pour the healing wave,
That she at last might win release,
And rest within her grave.

And when (as aye it thus befell)
They shrank to hear what she would say,
Sadly beneath that silvery well
She slowly passed away,—

So gently and so mournfully,
With hands meek folded on her breast ;—
Hard were the heart that could deny
The boon she would request.

Yet year on year, year after year,
The Moorish maiden's plaint did fall
On many a cold and heedless ear,
That recked not mercy's call ;

Unless perchance 'twere fear that chilled
The warmer current of their heart,
As, with a sudden terror filled,
They turned them to depart.

Year after year, year after year,
 She rose beneath the moonbeams pale,
 To see if any might be near
 To listen to her tale.

With claspèd hands and tearful eye,
 She sat and mourned beside the wave,
 “ O why could they not bid her lie
 In peace within her grave ? ”

And ever thus from year to year,
 As wearily her moan she made,
 None paused to lend a listening ear
 To her sad plaint for aid.

PART II.

Ev'n thus each night the Moorish maid
 Her gentle tale of sorrow told,
 Where still the murmuring waters played
 As in the days of old.

“ Once more the torturing spell hath power
 To rouse me from my troubled grave ;
 And I must watch, the midnight hour,
 Beside this glassy wave.

“ All dimly in the slumbrous air
Alhambra’s thousand turrets rise ;
While sleeping in the moonbeams fair
Each hill and valley lies.

“ Ah me ! the lingering years wear on ;
The fountain murmurs gently still ;
I hear, as in the days bygone,
Each distant mountain rill.

“ I hear across the golden vale
The tones that tell the midnight hour ;
I see beneath the moonbeams pale
Each turret, hall, and bower,—

“ How different now, and yet the same,
As when, in pride of youthful bloom,
Through all these gorgeous halls I came,
Undimmed by care or gloom.

“ Far, far through all the long-past years
My spirit roams, and tracks again
The current of its hopes and fears,—
Each early joy and pain.

“ O dazzling days of pomp and pride,
When fresh in youth’s exulting prime
I moved as fair as aught beside
In all that golden clime ; —

“ When many a gallant warrior-train
With burnished helm and glancing spear
Passed proudly to the battle-plain
With war-note loud and clear.

“ I think not now on pomp and power :
On empire past I dwell not more :
A softer and a sadder hour
Is brought mine eyes before.

“ He came, the captive Christian knight,
A stranger to the Moslem’s hall :
I gazed, nor knew in my delight
Lurked an unconscious thrall.

“ Ah happy days of love and bliss,
As more and more our souls were blended ;
O would with joy as deep as this
Our life and love had ended.

“ And oft he named the Blessed Name,
And my heart went with his the while ;
Yet fears unbidden went and came,
And chilled the passing smile.

“ He went unto his land again ;
I dared not go,— I could not stay : —
And so I wove my secret chain,
That fatal parting day.

“ Ah me ! the weary, weary years,
I sit and mourn beside the wave,
And mar the fountain with my tears
Beside my troubled grave.

“ In vain, in vain ; the treacherous star,
That gleamed awhile so bright and near,
Now coldly seems to shine from far,
So falsely fair and clear.

“ In vain, in vain ; the morning ray
Full soon will flush the eastern sky,
And I must vanish hence away
Until the night draw nigh,—

“ When aye the weary spell hath power
To wake me from my troubled grave
That I may watch, the midnight hour,
Beside this glassy wave.”

And ever thus from year to year
As gently still her moan she made,
None paused to lend a listening ear
To her sad plaint for aid.

PART III.

Age after age had passed away,
And hope on hope had faded long
In sad and slow but sure decay,
Though hope be very strong.

And now an olden tale it seemed,
How, reared on high by Paynim hand,
The hated Crescent once had gleamed
O'er all that golden land; —

And how, when came the Christian's time,
The flower of Moslem chivalry
Had sought them out their fathers' clime
Beyond the southern sea.

But ever sorrow hath its power,
And every heart its woe hath known,
As o'er our path from hour to hour
The shadowy veil is thrown.

One eve a maiden wandered near,
And musing sat beside the well,
While soothingly upon her ear
Its gentle murmur fell.

In sad and mournful mood she seemed ;
Her head was drooped upon her hand,
As one who in her exile dreamed
Of some far distant land ; —

While feebly from the city street
The fitful sounds were borne from far
Of varying groups that mingling meet
Beneath the evening star.

And deeper still the shadows closed ;
And the pale moonbeams, as they fell,
In one soft line of sheen repos'd
Upon the silvery well.

The maiden mused beside the stream
With tearful eye and drooping head,
While o'er her form one tender gleam
Of quivering light was shed.

And suddenly the waters clear
With hurried murmur seemed to flow;
And swifter struck upon her ear
Its ripple calm and low.

Then rose from out that fountain lone
A maiden form most bright and fair,
With robe of white around her thrown
As pure and thin as air.

“ Why weep’st thou by this silver wave ? ”
In sweet and thrilling tone she said ;
“ And why above my sleepless grave
Are tears of sorrow shed ? ”

“ I weep for one who comes not more ; —
I mourn for troth and love betrayed : —
So faithless now, so fond before, —
So treacherous visions fade.

“ The months are slowly rolling by,
And wearier grows my heart each day ;
The hopes, that cheered while he was nigh,
Are flitting fast away.”

“ Weep not ; — while yet in earthly frame,
Thy cares and sorrows were mine own :
Our pains and griefs may be the same,
The gladness thine alone.

“ Weep not ; thy woes shall have an end ;
Thy joy is yet in store for thee :
Then, gentle maiden, list and lend
A pitying ear to me.

“ I pray thee, in His mighty name,
Who for thee on the Cross did die,
To grant the boon for which I came,
Ere yet the hour pass by.

“ O speak the words of hope and peace,
And on me pour the healing wave,
That I at last may win release,
And rest within my grave.”

She clasped her hands ; she bent her head :
The maiden raised her arm on high :
O'er her the silvery wave she shed
Beneath that moonlit sky.

And when the holy words had ceased,
She crossed her hands upon her breast :
And gently, from the spell released,
She vanished to her rest.

She comes not to the fountain more :
She mourns not now beside the wave :
Her fitful weary watchings o'er,
She sleeps within her grave.

And oft the village maidens now
The Moorish phantom's legend tell :
As, bright of eye, and bold of brow,
They meet around the well,

Beneath Alhambra's crumbling wall,
Where still its murmuring water plays,
By day, and when the moonbeams fall,
As in the former days.

G. W. C.

SONGS OF THE CONQUEST.

SONGS OF THE CONQUEST.

It is only quite recently that the real nature of the great events of the eleventh century, the fall of our native monarchy, and the establishment of an alien dynasty on the throne of England, have been thoroughly understood. To enter into any political or historical examination of the numerous questions which at once present themselves at their very mention, would be altogether foreign to the design of the present publication. Poetry, especially of the class to which most of these compositions belong, is concerned rather with men than with nations, or, at all events, views nations only in their most outward and, as it were, personal aspect. It is sufficient if the real spirit and costume of an epoch be so preserved as to make the picture more vivid in the eyes of the historical student,

without making it so over allusive as to become repulsive to the ordinary reader.

It is therefore mainly with the *persons* of this great drama that the present series of poems is concerned. And these have been at least as much misconceived as the more recondite aspect of the period. It is only quite of late that the character of our last national prince, and of the house from which he sprung, has been rescued from the calumnies of eight centuries by the labours of those great historical inquirers of whom our age has so much reason to be proud. And still more recently has the view which at once rests on the soundest evidence and is in itself the most acceptable to every true-hearted Englishman been made familiar to all, in a tale in which one hardly knows whether most to admire the acuteness and diligence of historical investigation, or the force of poetic creation and pictorial grouping. The whole of these poems, with the single exception of the one headed "King Harold's Funeral," have been written since the appearance of Sir E. Bulwer Lytton's magnificent romance; and

while the authors thankfully acknowledge the many points in which thoughts and phrases have been suggested to them by it, they cannot forbear adding their testimony to its extreme accuracy—altogether wonderful in a work of fiction—as an historical picture, in every point at all essential to the right understanding of the period.

The first poem of the five is altogether imaginative, and is entirely suggested by the romantic and unhistoric portion of the tale of “Harold.” The famous story of Edith of the Swan’s Neck can hardly be considered as a piece of authentic history; probability is the highest rank to which it can lay claim. Under these circumstances no one can regret the beautiful fiction which Sir E. Bulwer Lytton has founded upon it; one which, though purely the creation of his own genius, he has so carefully preserved from in any way contradicting the recorded facts of the history. The main features of *his* tale of Edith are taken for granted in the present poem; the early love of Harold for Edith; the

impediment to their marriage in their remote consanguinity; his unwilling and political marriage with Ealdgyth, the daughter of *Ælfgar*, are all, as seemed most natural in a piece put into the mouth of Harold himself, rather assumed than stated. But without some such mention as this, the scope of the poem might be misconceived by any reader (if any such there be) unacquainted with Sir E. Bulwer Lytton's romance. Whether Harold's marriage with Ealdgyth was other than a match of affection is of course a question beyond the province of history; it is certain that the connexion was one marvellously calculated to promote his political interests.

In the present poem, however, two deviations have been made from the story of "Harold." Edith has been represented as *unconscious* of Harold's attachment. It appeared to the writer that his treatment of the subject would be the most effective in a short occasional piece, while it is equally clear that it could not, so well as that actually adopted by Sir E. Bulwer Lytton,

have been carried out through the whole extent of a romance.

Secondly, one or two allusions will be found to Harold's children. Of these, as of Harold's former marriage, no notice is taken by Sir E. B. Lytton ; though not absolutely inconsistent with his story, their introduction would have considerably marred its effect. But that Harold was a widower at the time of his marriage with Ealdgyth, may, although the name of his first wife has not been preserved, be regarded as proved by the number and age of the children whom he left ; namely, two daughters and four sons, some of whom were capable of bearing arms within three years after the death of their father. Now, from the date of his marriage with Ealdgyth, these last at least could not have been her children, and none of them are spoken of as being illegitimate.

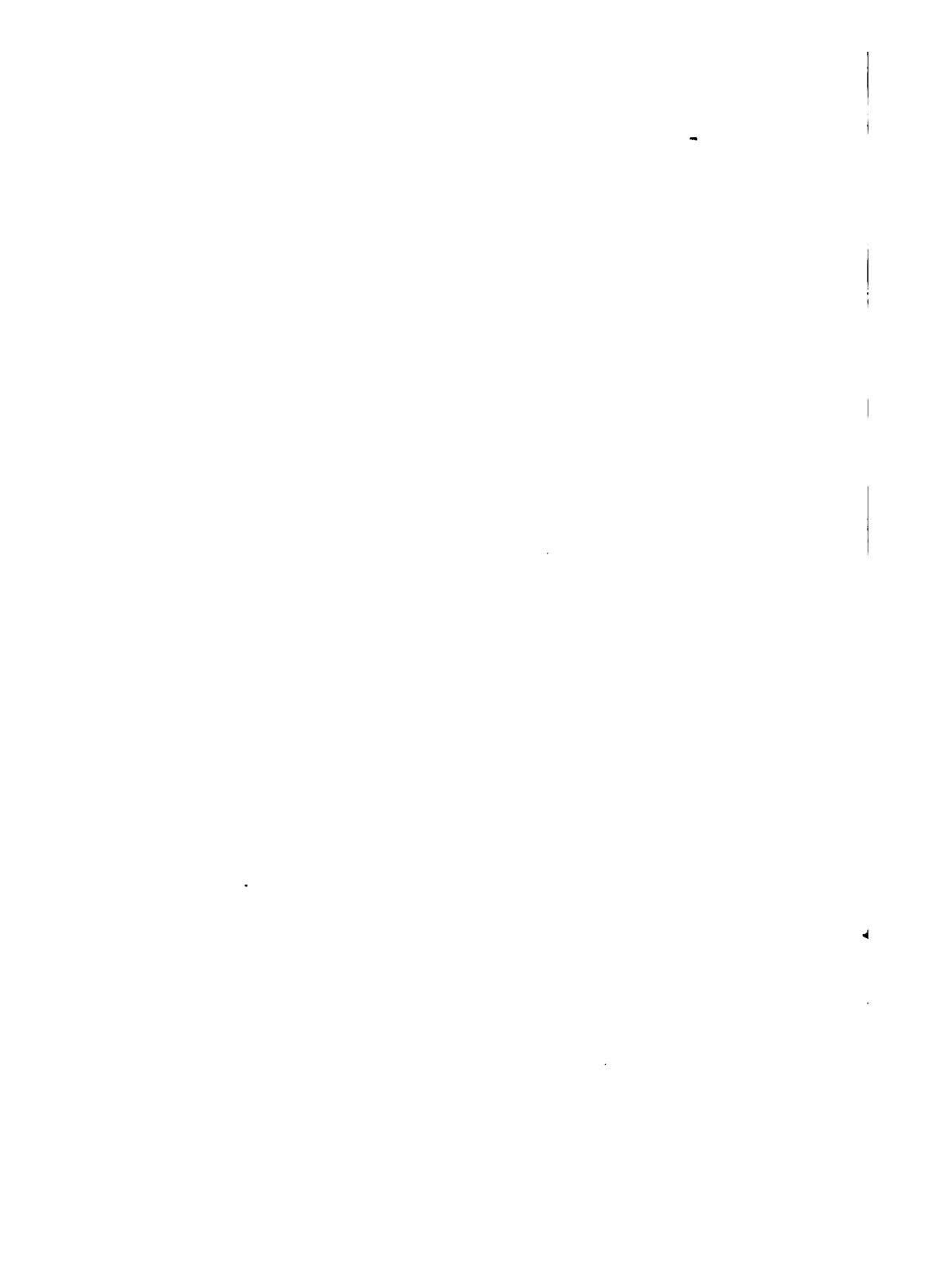
The two poems on the Battle of Hastings itself require little or no comment. Most of the details will be found in some one or other of the many accounts of the fight. Some apology may

perhaps appear due for the introduction of two pieces on precisely the same subject; but, as each had been composed in entire ignorance of a similar intention being entertained by the other writer, and as the manner in which the subject is treated in the two is altogether different, there did not seem any reason for omitting either.

The fourth piece, entitled "King Harold's Funeral," was written long before any of the others, and indeed, as was above stated, some years before the appearance of Sir E. B. Lytton's romance. It is necessary to bear this in mind, on account of its inconsistency with the preceding one, owing to its following the popular notion of Edith as the mistress of Harold, or, at all events, the "*mulier quam ante sumptum regimen dilexerat.*"

The last of this group, as being on a subject much less familiarly known, may require some explanation. It has been introduced both as being on a very striking subject in itself, and with the view of calling attention to the fact,

first pointed out by Thierry and Sir James Mackintosh, that England was not conquered in a single battle. It was, in fact, seven years before the Norman held undisputed sway throughout the whole land. Among the events of this long warfare, the temporary revival of the native English royalty at York, in the year 1069, in the person of Edgar Ætheling, stands out as one of the most prominent. This was effected by a union of the native chiefs of Northumberland with the army sent to their aid by Svend Estrithson, King of the Danes, who, as nephew of Canute and cousin of Harold, was especially interested in the affairs of England, besides the close community of blood between the Danes and Northumbrians in general. William, however, recovered York the next year, having induced Osbiorn, the Danish commander, by a large bribe, to desert the English cause. A horrible devastation of all the surrounding country was the effect of his vengeance.



HAROLD AND EDITH.

1.

THE rite is done ; and now I am a king,
And I have felt the crown upon my brow,
And I have sat and seen a princely ring,
My peers of late, before my footstool bow,
As round me thronged the noble and the brave,
And bade me grasp the gift that England gave.

2.

I heard them hail the king whose own right hand
Hath won the sceptre he alone can wield ;
And now upon my native earth I stand,
Her lord in sages' court and tented field ;
My heart to counsel, and my arm to stay,
While foe and traitor mark her for their prey.

3.

A crown is mine ; and yet no sires gone by
Have left to me what they might hold no more ;
Nor doth my realm behold with shrinking eye
A king whose throne is dabbled with her gore ;
Boast ye who may a father's kingly grave,
Be mine the crown a free-born people gave.

4.

I am a king indeed ; full oft have I
Heard the glad shout of conquering thousands rise
At Harold's name ; yet never such a cry
Struck on mine ear, as when the gleaming prize
Of all my toils upon this brow was laid,
And England hailed the king herself had made.

5.

Nor did I stand alone ; there at my side
Were all the faithful ones of Godwin's line,
Leofwine and Gyrth and Haco, and the pride
Of mine own strength ; too weak as yet to shine
In court or camp ; yet did your young hearts bound,
To see your sire with Alfred's circlet crowned.

6.

And thou wast there, my mother ; deep the woe
That thou hast borne ; yet none, I fain would deem,
Hath come from me : one son in death lies low,
And one is worse than dead ; yet fondest dream
Of mother's love no prouder hopes could build,
Than thy glad eyes have seen this day fulfilled.

7.

And yet there was a void—my heart beat high,
My soul was all on fire, as every tongue
Pealed forth my name, and every gazing eye
Was turned on me — who deemed that aught had
flung
A shade of grief, where all things seemed to bless,
And dashed the cup of pride with bitterness ?

8.

For thou wast there ; yea in the very hour
They raised me on the shield, and hailed me king,
One dearer looked upon my new-born power
Than brother, child, or mother ; 'mid the ring
Of nearest ones I saw thee, and a smile,
Like but thine own, played o'er thy cheeks the while.

9.

Joy kindled in thine eye, as thou didst see
Thy friend and brother on a kingly throne ;
Grief clouded his who fondly gazed on thee,
To think thou ne'er mightst share it as thine own ;
Thine all the harmless glee of youthful time,
And my first kingly thought a thought of crime.

10.

Edith, my loved one ! I may speak that word,
When none can hear me, and it glads me still
'Mid shame and sorrow ; thou hast never heard,
Hast never dreamed, what thoughts my bosom fill ;
Or thou hadst turned away, nor I from thee
Had won those looks which yet must priceless be.

11.

Oft have I wondered, as thy laughing eyes
Have met my fervent gaze, and smiled again,
All harmless and unknowing ; oft the prize
That kings might war for in my hand hath lain,
And thou hast felt not in that brief caress
The grasp of love's own speechless tenderness.

12.

Happy and pure as lovely ; no wild burst
Of passion stirs thy heart ; thou dost not know
His grief who in his blessedness is curst,
And banished in his nearness ; nor the woe
Of a sealed heart which every thought may tell,
Save that with which its very life-strings swell.

13.

I am to thee a brother ; what art thou
To me ? I dare not speak it, while I see
A bright one with a crown upon her brow
Throned at my side — daughter of princes she,
Mother of kings, if aught by favouring Heaven
Of light or life to Godwin's house is given.

14.

King, husband, father — why to thee, sweet maid,
Still hath my heart for all its gladness sought ?
I will not say that it hath never strayed
To joys forbidden ; but avaunt the thought —
For who would mar the very life of all,
Without whose charm thy beauty's self would pall ?

15.

What would I? All that thou canst give is mine,
All that a brother from thy love might claim;
Sweet looks, sweet words, the hand oft clasped in thine,
The low soft breathing of thy darling name;
Yet when all this my heart hath most enjoyed,
That very hour I feel the dreariest void.

16.

I know not what I crave; still let it be
As it hath been; let me be blest as now,
Though in my very bliss is agony;
Still let me gaze upon thy sunny brow,
Still drink in thy sweet voice, still cling to thee,
With love that hopeless, speechless, aye must be.

17.

This, and I ask no more; though years roll by,
And merry England's king be sad at heart;
But spare one vision to my burning eye,
Spare to my maddened soul one keenest smart;
Let me not see another at thy side,
To claim the joys that are to me denied.

18.

Let me not see, why I must stand afar,
Another who may revel in thy charms—
Be he as dear as Gyrth and Leofwine are,
He turns to foe and rival in thine arms—
Nor look on those who thee for mother claim,
Yet lisp not Harold as their father's name.

19.

But hark, far other sounds are in mine ear,
These are not dreams for kings when strife is nigh;
I hear the Norman trumpet pealing near,
I hear another Harold's battle-cry.
Out, Holy Rood! soon in that maddening roar
Must England reign where Edith reigns no more.

E. A. F.

THE FIELD OF HASTINGS.

Εἰ γάρ ἐλευθερίης πειρήσαιο, οὐκ ἀν δόρυσι συμβούλεύοις ημῖν περὶ αὐτῆς μάχεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ πελέκεσι. — Herod. vii. 135.

1.

'TWAS on the field of Senlac,
 On Saint Calixtus' day,
 That we heard the Norman trumpet
 Sound proudly for the fray ;
 And we girded on our harness,
 And we formed a bristling ring,
 Where the White Horse banner waved on high
 O'er England's chosen king.

2.

King Harold stood before our lines,
 'Twas a gallant sight, I ween,
 Than the king that English hearts had made
 No braver might be seen ;
 He looked upon us fondly
 With his eye of clearest blue,
 And he waved his mighty battle-axe
 All in the foeman's view.

3.

Then out and spake King Harold ;
And we blessed him as we heard,
And axe and javelin loudly clashed
At every gracious word—
“ I stand before you here this day,
The guard of England’s right,
The king yourselves have chosen
For counsel and for fight.

4.

“ Now for the laws of every king
That right and freedom gave,
Now for the shrines of every saint
That guards a father’s grave ;
Now for the children ye would save
From the tyrant’s bitter sway,
And the great name of England,
Be Englishmen to-day.

5.

“ Fear not their trampling horses,
Nor the archer’s distant band ;
Stand firm upon your native earth,
And meet them hand to hand ;

Lift high the mightier weapon
That mocks at lance and bow,
The axe that cleaves through shield and helm
To the life-strings of the foe.

6.

“ Think of the fight yourselves have won
But seven short days ago,
Think how the Waster of the World
Before your arms lay low :
Think how your axes clave to earth
The Norseman’s serried shield ;
Shall they who smote Hardrada
To a dainty Frenchman yield ?

7.

“ Stand stedfast, Dane and Saxon,
For your fathers’ rights this day,
For the laws, and tongue, and freedom,
That your foes have cast away ;
So let the knights of Frankland flee
From Alfred’s yeomen true,
So let the sons of Guthorm scourge
The renegades of Rou.”

8.

Hark, the war-cries loud are pealing,
Each foeman's ear to greet,
Like the wild roar of the foaming waves,
When two ocean currents meet;
“God help us” rises proudly,
Like the swelling floods of Seine;
But the thunder-shout of “Holy Rood”
Sweeps on like the northern main.

9.

Hurrah! the foes are moving,
They are coming on amain,
Ten thousand horse-hoofs clatter
O'er Senlac's battle-plain:
Their helmets nod full gallantly,
Their lances brightly shine,
But fiercer the glare of the lifted axe
O'er the Saxon's serried line.

10.

Hurrah! the foes are on us,
Our axes sweep on high;
Hurrah! hurrah! at every sweep
The horse and his rider die:

Upon them good King Harold,
With every Kentish thane ;
Upon them Gyrth and Leofwine,
And Haco son of Sweyn.

11.

Then vain were spear and destrier,
Then vain was shaft and bow,
As King Harold, son of Godwin,
Stood forth to meet his foe :
As helmets high were shivered,
And lance-heads strewed the ground,
Where'er the Northern battle-axe
Had dealt its ghastly wound.

12.

A knight hath spurred his charger
The monarch's sweep within,
And the head-piece of that daring knight
Is cleft from crown to chin ;
Far off his steed is bounding,
As his lord is lying low,
King Harold stands upon his corpse,
And craves another foe.

13.

Another spear is at his breast,
Another helm nods high ;
Another sweep, and helm and spear
All crushed and shivered lie.
King Harold greets his gallant thanes,
Loud cheering as they view,
“ So doth the scythe of Hengest mow
The barley-fields of Rou.” .

14.

Then rose the shout of conquest
From Saxon and from Dane ;
One pealing shout of “ Holy Rood ”
Reechoed through the plain ;
It pealed where Bastard William rode
High on his steed of snow,
It pealed where cursed Odo gave
His benison of woe.

15.

Rank after rank is charging,
But the wedge still cleaves its way,
And rank on rank is falling fast
Where the lifted axes play ;

Wave after wave comes foaming on
In the Norman's tempest shock,
Wave after wave is dashed away
From the Kentman's rifted rock.

16.

So through the hottest battle
We urged our blasting way,
And the White Horse of Hengest waved
In triumph o'er the fray ;
And his stout hoofs trampled in the dust
The Leopard's puny might,
As we battled for the Saxon crown
And the Saxon people's right.

17.

But King Harold, son of Godwin,
The prince of all the land,
Down went the bravest of the foe
Beneath his good right hand ;
Down went the lordly baron,
Down went the hireling slave,
Before his glance who wore the crown
That a free-born people gave.

18.

But proudly still the banners
 Float in the farther sky,
And a mightier war-shout tells us
 Of a mightier foeman nigh ;
A thousand lances glimmer,
 A thousand pennons wave,
Fast by the royal standard
 That the Holy Father gave.

19.

A thousand lances glimmer ;
 And, high o'er the highest there,
The war-club of the Bastard
 Is whirling in the air ;
Now to the van King Harold,
 With every Kentish thane,
Now to the van each Englishman,
 As ye curse a stranger's reign.

20.

The battle-axe is lifted,
 The lance is levelled true,
Firm stands the wall of Hengest
 'Neath the thunder-charge of Rou ;

A hundred knights are sinking
From stirrup and from selle,
And a hundred thanes are falling,
Each smiting as he fell.

21.

But high above the tumult
Two mightier weapons ring,
The war-club of the Bastard,
And the axe of England's king ;
Each dealing death around him
Where'er his glance is seen,
Each pressing fast where he sees afar
His rival's buckler's sheen.

22.

O 'twas the strife of giants,
'Twas the strife of days gone by,
Which the gods our fathers worshipped
Might have seen with raptured eye,
As the lordly Duke came thundering on,
Like Woden in his might,
When Asgard's hosts are marshalling
For the last and deadliest fight.

23.

Right gallant knights are pressing fast
By the standard of their lord,
Right well they guide the levelled spear,
Right well they wield the sword ;
But aye Duke William's helmet
Nods foremost in the war,
And aye Duke William's battle-cry
The loudest peals afar.

24.

But King Harold, son of Godwin,
The prince of all the land,
Firm stands he with his calm blue eye,
With his lifted axe in hand ;
He hath marked his foeman coming,
He hath primed him for the strife,
One moment, and earth's mightiest
Had met for death and life.

25.

But the spear of Gyrth is piercing
His horse's scales between ;
Two inches higher, and merry England
A master had never seen ;

High rears the steed in anguish,
In dust his rider lies,
And deemed each man that saw him fall
That darkness veiled his eyes.

26.

Then rose the shout of conquest
From Saxon and from Dane,
As we saw the mighty Bastard
Lie stretched upon the plain ;
Now English thanes are charging
And pressing on amain,
And Norman knights are falling back,
As they deemed their hero slain.

27.

But close around the fallen
Gather his bravest still ;
One breathing-space, and firm again
He stands, and feels no ill ;
Another steed, another charge,
And, foremost in the fray,
The war-club of the Bastard
Still cleaves its blasting way.

28.

He hath torn his vizor from his face,
And, scowling o'er the field,
His brows are knit, his teeth are gnashed,
To see his chosen yield.
“ Ten thousand curses on the man
That deems of me as slain,
I live, par la resplendar Dè,
And, while I live, will reign.”

29.

He spake, and burst yet fiercer
Upon our bristling line,
And the flower of France came pressing on
Where the golden leopards shine,
D'Aumale, and Bruce, and Grantmesnil,
And Mallet's knightly pride,
And cursed Odo waves his staff
Fast by his brother's side.

30.

But all in vain the chargers,
Where the Kentman stands at bay,
And all in vain the lances,
Where the lifted axes play;

Still trampled is the pennon,
Still cleft the blazoned shield,
And the victor shout of "Holy Rood"
Still thunders o'er the field.

31.

O woe for merry England,
And England's chosen king,
Woe for the tale of sorrow
That gleeman may not sing;
The Frank comes on in conquest,
On high the Leopard gleams,
And few the hearts that gather still
Where the White Horse banner streams.

32.

O woe for merry England,
Her blunted axe lies low,
And scattered is the serried line
That stemmed the charging foe;
And the flagging cry of "Holy Rood"
Is raised, but raised in vain,
Where the war-shout of "God help us"
Loud thunders o'er the plain.

33.

But 'twas no combat hand to hand
That smote down England's king,
No charge of open battle
That broke her bristling ring,
No strife of warriors' hearts and hands
That Northern tongues may tell,
But the practised lie, the feignèd flight,
That the lying Frank suits well.

34.

But King Harold, son of Godwin,
The prince of all the land,
Still stands he by his standard,
With his lifted axe in hand ;
And still around him gather
A firm and faithful train,
Round him, and Gyrth, and Leofwine,
And Haco son of Sweyn.

35.

Now to your axes, Englishmen,
Though a little band ye be;
Keep but the field till eventide,
And England still is free;

Stand by the shield-wall till the sun
Hath sunk beneath the sea,
And one man shall chase a thousand,
And from five a host shall flee.

36.

They are coming, they are coming,
Like wolves around the fold,
And the Bastard flames before them all,
With the leopards wrought in gold ;
On comes Belesme, and Mowbray,
And Fitzhamon's arm of might,
And Hugh the Wolf is ravening still
Through the thickest of the fight.

37.

As hounds half spent, yet eager still,
Close fast around their prey,
So the flower of Norman knighthood pressed
Along the thickening fray ;
As the wearied stag with levelled horns
Still proudly stands at bay,
So the last hope of England stood
Around her king that day.

38.

By Heaven, the day may still be ours,
Our axes sweep on high,
And still, as when our arms were fresh,
The horse and his rider die ;
The Bastard's brow still darkens,
As his bravest charge in vain,
And King Harold's eye still glistens
O'er many a foeman slain.

39.

King Harold's eye still glistens,
Still his cheering voice is heard,
And still our hearts are beating high
At every gracious word ;
And each man swore by his father's grave,
And the saints that rule on high,
With the king ourselves had chosen
To conquer or to die.

40.

But a fiercer wave is gathering,
Its surges higher swell,
And louder was the triumph note
That echoed as it fell ;

Beneath the charge of myriad spears
Good thanes in dust are laid,
And so thick the hail of falling shafts,
That we battle in the shade.

41.

But no English heart hath failed us ;
What man would turn to fly,
While we heard King Harold's war-shout,
While we marked his flashing eye ;
While we saw his arm unwearied
Still lifted up to slay,
And beneath his feet the bravest
Of the knights of Frankland lay ?

42.

But woe for merry England,
And England's chosen king ;
The arrow hurtles in the air
With swift and deadly wing ;
It hath lighted on the helmet
That had turned back sword and spear,
It hath pierced the eye from whose stern glance
Their bravest shrunk in fear.

43.

As a brother calls for vengeance
Where a brother bleeding lies,
As a father mourns his only son
Struck down before his eyes,
As a bride weeps for her lover
Slain on his wedding-day,
So the strong heart of England throbbed,
Where good King Harold lay.

44.

They are howling o'er the fallen,
Like wolves around their prey ;
They are shouting for the victory
Of Senlac's bloody fray ;
They are boasting of the goodly homes
Which the spoiler soon shall own,
And they hail the Norman Bastard
The heir of Cerdic's throne.

45.

From morn till eve had axe and spear
Right manfully been plied,
And few were by the standard,
When good King Harold died ;

And fewer still, when Senlac's plain
Was shrouded o'er by night,
With one deep groan for our captive land,
We turned us from the fight.

46.

They have conquered, they have conquered,
Let them boast them as they may,
How their lying craft hath won the palm
In Senlac's bloody fray ;
But not a single captive
Was the prize of that fierce strife,
Still did the war-axe rise and fall,
While an English arm had life.

47.

We have conquered, we have conquered,
Though not on tented plain,
And the laws and tongue of Alfred
We have won them back again.
The boasted might of Normandy
For aye is laid at rest,
But the name of Saxon freedom
Still warms each faithful breast.

48.

And when strangers throng her palaces,
Let England's heart recall
How Godwin chased the stranger
From good King Edward's hall ;
And when we march to battle,
Let England's gleemen tell
How for her right and freedom
The sons of Godwin fell.

E. A. F.

THE FIELD OF HASTINGS.

1.

RAISE high the song of triumph
For the noble and the brave,
Who to guard their home and country
Have found a bloody grave,
Where the ghastly heaps of slaughtered men
Are thickly piled around,
To hallow Freedom's altar
On the red and gory ground.

2.

Shout for all the mighty heroes,
Shout for every deathless name,
All that lived and died unconquered,
Since the curse of bloodshed came,—
Who placed before the hearths they loved
Their bodies for a shield,
And watered with a living stream
The tented battle field.

3.

Raise high the song of triumph
For the glorious names of old,
Where'er a tale of tyranny
And burning wrong is told ;—
In North or South or East or West,
In cold or torrid clime,
Shall the valiant acts of heroes
Be the heritage of time.

4.

Still on the plains of Marathon
The shouts of battle peal,
And seems the earth beneath the shock
Of struggling hosts to reel ;
And in the undying memory
Of the dauntless and the free
Platæa lives and Salamis
And dread Thermopylæ.

5.

And her children's blood hath hallowed
The sunny fields of Spain,
Where once the Paynim triumphed
On Xeres' fatal plain,

And hopeful yet the Christian strove
Full many a weary day,
Until before the gleaming Cross
The Crescent waned away.

6.

But louder be the kindling strain
For England's holier dead,
Who for her weal and freedom
On the battle field have bled ;
Though mid the countless slaughter
Ere they sunk upon the plain,
For the holy cause of England
Fell the battle-axe in vain.

7.

The shades of evening slowly crept
Through Waltham's holy pile,
And fainter stole the paling light
Throughout each darkening aisle ;
And dimly from the altar beamed
The taper's flickering ray,
As silently the brethren came
Before the shrine to pray.

8.

There, as the waning light of day
Through gathering darkness steals,
With claspéd hands and bended head
King Harold lowly kneels;
For he goeth forth to battle,
And he meekly bows in prayer
That his heart be made more holy,
And his hand be strengthened there.

9.

“ God shield thee, good King Harold,—
When thou speedest to the fight,
May He that reigns for ever
Look down and guard thy right.”
Thus for the weal of England
By all the prayer was raised,
As stedfastly on Harold
And on the Rood they gazed.

10.

King Harold riseth from his knees,—
What means yon fearful sign ?
The Holy Rood is quivering
With the Saviour’s form divine.

Ev'n as he rose, that awful head
A moment o'er him bent;—
God send it be not now for woe
That token dread is sent.

11.

King Harold passeth sadly forth,
For o'er his wildered soul
The whelming streams of dizzy thoughts
In maddening eddies roll :
One moment more, and then he passed
From Waltham's holy gates,
To fight for England on the plain
Where the Norman robber waits.

12.

But soon his eye grew bright again,—
With hope his heart beat high ;
“ God aid me in the struggle,
As on Him I will rely.
Arm for the strife, brave English hearts,
Defend your fathers' laws ;
And when we meet the Norman hosts,
God prosper England's cause.”

13.

It was the eve of battle:
Faint sighed the breezes still,
Where England's royal banner
Was waving on the hill;
But not a breath did stir the plain,
Where, ranged in proud array
For the morrow's work of carnage,
The hosts of the Bastard lay.

14.

And solemnly commingling
Through the watches of the night
Rose the clash of swords and lances
And the warnings for the fight.
And the hymn from out the Norman camp,—
The Saxon's careless strain,—
As fitfully they rose,—awaked
Strange echoes o'er the plain.

15.

It is the morn:—the sunbeams rest
Upon the battle field,
And its rays are glancing gaily
On spear and helm and shield,

As the serried ranks are hurrying
To form their grim array
Ere the trumpet's blast shall call them
To the wild and bloody fray.

16.

Full oft throughout the Norman lines
Duke William rode apace,
With haughty brow and fiery eye
And mien of kingly grace :—
The glance that lit the Bastard's eye
Was as the serpent's glare ;
His brow with dark and crafty wile
Was wrinkled as with care.

17.

King Harold cheered his Englishmen
With clear unfurrowed brow ;
And ne'er before his keen blue eye
Had beamed so bright as now.
And, shading off his sunny brow,
Flowed down his locks of gold ;—
They might deem him sprung of a nobler race
Than the men of mortal mould.

18.

And loud and clear in every ear
King Harold's voice was heard ;
And with a deep and solemn thrill
Forthwith each heart was stirred.
Then rose from all the prayer to Heaven
For strength against the foe,
And the vow to strike for England,
So bide them weal or woe.

19.

Then burst the war-cries loud and fierce
Mid clash of spear and shield ;
And shouts were mingled fearfully
Through all the battle field.
And thicker, stormier, grew the fray,
And madder yet the roar,
As the waves are lashed in fury
On the hollow sounding shore.

20.

“On, Normans, Holy Church !”—the shout
Was wildly borne on high ;
And louder, clearer, “Holy Rood
For England ” was the cry.

“ Ha Rou ! Ha Rou !” more furious yet
The din of battle grew ;
The sunbeams o'er that deadly fight
A ghastly splendour threw.

21.

And far and near o'er the serried ranks
King Harold's form rose high ;
And far and near o'er all the din
Rose Harold's battle-cry.
And thick they fell, where'er his hand
Dealt fast each deadly blow ;
Where shore his axe, through helm and mail
All cloven sunk the foe.

22.

“ On, Holy Rood !” — brave English hearts,
Remember Stanford plain : —
God send the Norman fight, as there
Hardrada fought in vain.
Still from the sweep of Harold's arm
The foemen shrink dismayed,
As though his mighty battle-axe
By no mortal hand were swayed.

23.

And till the fight raged thickest,
From the first grey streak of morn
There stood two brethren watching
By a lonely clump of thorn.
Their hands were clasped upon their breasts ;
Their eyes were strained to see
How sped King Harold in the fight,
And what the end might be.

24.

And ever waxed the cries more fierce,
And stormier grew the fray,—
“God shield thee, royal Harold,
And thou shalt win the day.”
And ever in the deepest mass
King Harold’s form was seen,
With his deadly gleaming battle-axe
And armour’s glittering sheen.

25.

“Ha Rou! Ha Rou!”—ye craven souls,
Ha! flee ye from the fight,
And glances now the Saxon spear
Too dazzling for your sight?

“On, Holy Rood!”—the Normans flee,
The English follow fast;
And winged with death is every stroke,
Like the fiery desert blast.

26.

“Ha Rou! Ha Rou!”—the lie hath won,—
The combat deadlier grows:
And locked in the death grapple
The writhing foemen close.
Thicker and faster thicker yet
The Norman warriors throng,—
And thegns and eorls are whelmed apace,
As the battle sweeps along.

27.

“Ha Rou! Ha Rou!”—the shaft hath told,
King Harold reels and falls:
Yet once again “On, Holy Rood,
For England” loud he calls:
Then dizzily before his eyes
The thick death shadows swim,
And fainter sounds the battle’s roar,
The lances flash more dim.

28.

Then high was heaped the slaughter,
And the carnage clogged the field;
And stalwart thegns lay gashed and cleft,
Who would not flee nor yield.
And their hands still grasped their axes,
And the foemen slain around
Showed how was nerved the English arm
That fought for English ground.

29.

Then rode the Norman chivalry,
All o'er the battle plain,—
Odo, false Bishop,—brave D'Aumale,
Fitz Osbörne,—De Mortain.
And there in guise of thankfulness
The glad Te Deum rose,
That the perjured were the conquered,
And the Church had crushed her foes.

30.

The shades of evening closed apace
Upon that ghastly scene;
And all the plain was steeped with blood
That was yesterday so green.

And gladder yet the conqueror's hymn
Rung out at the close of day,
For the Norman was the victor,
And in death the Saxon lay.

31.

With hooded form and faltering step
The brethren sadly came,
To seek throughout the cumbered field
The brave of Saxon name,
And bear King Harold's corse away
From off the battle plain,
Where it lay amid the countless heaps
Of the dying and the slain.

32.

And there midst all the carnage
They found a maiden fair,
As groping mid the slaughtered
She sought for Harold there.
But her slender hands availed not
To move them as they lay,
Where, with foemen piled above them,
Their souls had passed away.

33.

There slept Earl Godwin's kingly sons,
Brave Leofwine glad and gay,
And the smile still rested on his lips
Where cold and stiff he lay.
And there was Gyrth, the good and brave,
With gashed and gory brow ;
He hath won the crown unfading,
And his toil is ended now.

34.

And where Hengist's phantom banner
Had wooed the morning air,
Full many a stalwart thegn of Kent
Lay stark and stiffened there.
And 'neath the conquering gonfanon
Slept Haco dark and stern,
And with a fierce unwonted light
Still seemed his eye to burn.

35.

And well they deemed the king was near,
Who saw young Haco's form,
For both would aye together brave
The fury of the storm.

And all beneath the mangled heaps
More cleft and gashed than all,
They found a noble warrior slain
With goodly form and tall.

36.

O then a wild and piercing shriek
Burst from that maiden fair;
She knew King Harold, as he lay
So gashed and cloven there.
None other eyes but those of love
Could know that ghastly head,
Amid the bloody corses
Of the foemen round him spread.

37.

The sun rose on his glory,
The morn beheld his pride,
The evening saw the mangled heaps
Where Earl Godwin's son had died.
And they who sought him mid the slain
The Bastard's boon did crave,
That they to England's chosen king
Might give a hallowed grave.

38.

O Senlac, on thy crimsoned field
 No star of freedom set ;
From out the blood upon thee poured
 The Saxon conquers yet.
Nor, mid the fearful carnage
 That dyed thy purple plain,
For the holy cause of England
 Smote the battle-axe in vain.

39.

From the blood of slaughtered heroes
 There hath sprung a goodly tree,
And its branches cast their shadows
 On the island of the free.
For North and South and East and West,
 By every distant shore,
Is deemed most free the sea-girt land
 Where Harold ruled of yore.

40.

O rest thee, royal Harold,
 With the glory of thy fame,
That shineth with a hallowed light
 For ever on thy name.

And, be they in their native land
Or far beyond the sea,
Right dear to all true English hearts
Thy memory still shall be.

41.

Raise high the song of triumph
For our fathers' deeds of old,
Whene'er the tale of Harold
And of Sanguelac is told ;
And think on all the noble hearts
Who valiantly did wield
The English spear and battle-axe
On Hastings' bloody field.

42.

In time of weal or woe, where'er
An English pulse shall beat,
Shall Harold's deeds for English ears
Still make a music sweet ;
And none shall deem that in the fight
On Senlac's crimsoned plain
For the holy cause of England
Hath Harold died in vain.

G. W. C.

KING HAROLD'S FUNERAL.

τίς οὐκ ἀν τῶν μεταγενεστέρων ζηλώσαι τὴν ἀρετὴν τῶν ἀνδρῶν,
οἵτινες τῷ μεγέθει τῆς περιστάσεως κατεσχημάνοι τοῖς μὲν σώμασι κατε-
πονήθησαν, ταῖς δὲ ψυχαῖς οὐχ ἡττήθησαν; τοιγαροῦν οὗτοι μόνοι τῶν
μνημονευομένων κρατηθέντες ἐνδοξότεροι γεγόνασι τῶν ἀλλων τὰς καλ-
λιστας νίκας ἀπενηγμένων.—Diod. Sic. xi. 11.

1.

DUKE WILLIAM feasted in his tent,
 His captains all around ;
And sounds of gladsome melody
 Through all his camp resound :
A thousand fires are flashing high
 O'er Senlac's battle-plain,
And England heard the victor shout
 That told her hero slain.

2.

O sad the sight that bloody night
 Beneath her bosom veiled,
When as the Saxon battle-axe
 Before the stranger failed :

And on the plain were bleeding
The noblest of our land,
And stark in death King Harold lay,
Amid that ghastly band.

3.

Then came two priests across the plain
To William's royal tent,
And as they passed the threshold,
Their knee they humbly bent;
The knights and nobles of his train
Looked stern with wrathful eyes,
But feared to harm that hallowed garb,
And William bade them rise.

4.

“ Stand up,” said he, “ ye men of God,
I do not war with you;
Ne'er 'gainst the ministers of peace
True knight his falchion drew:
But tell us wherefore are ye come
Among our warrior train,
For whatsoe'er may be your prayer,
Ye shall not ask in vain.”

5.

Then rose the brothers from their knees,
And deep each bosom sighed,
To see amid their own dear land
The foeman's conquering pride :
Then out spake Ailric to the Duke,
“ We come from Waltham tower,
To crave the body of the chief
Who fell in yonder stour.

6.

“ For know it was King Harold
Who built Waltham's minster fair,
And bade us, whensoe'er he died,
To lay his body there ;
Wherfore our founder's corpse we crave,
In his own church to lay,
That we may for his soul and thine
Our daily masses say.”

7.

Duke William's brow was bent in thought ;
Then, like a noble foe,
He bade them, when the day should dawn,
Through Senlac's field to go,

And seek for noble Harold,
And bear him to the grave,
With all the rites that fit a king
And knight in battle brave.

8.

All night upon that bloody plain
Those brethren knelt in prayer ;
And oft they heard the dying groan
Of men who perished there ;
And oftentimes burst upon their ear
The Normans' victor cry ;
And watch-fires showed the hallowed flag
In triumph waving high.

9.

As soon as night had passed away,
They traversed all the plain,
To seek for Harold's bloody corpse
Amid the heaps of slain :
They saw brave knights and men-at-arms
Lie cold upon the ground,
Where'er the Northern battle-axe
Had dealt its ghastly wound.

10.

They saw stout thanes, whose dying hands
Still grasped its mighty haft,
Each with his manly bosom pierced
With many a deadly shaft ;
None lay as slain in coward flight,
For all were valiant there,
And fixed eyes on their foemen seemed
To cast a haughty stare.

11.

But where was Britain's mightiest lord
Those princely thanes among ?
Where was the stoutest arm that e'er
The axe of Wessex swung ?
So gashed was every face with wounds,
The brothers could not tell
The monarch's form among the chiefs
Who round about him fell.

12.

Then sought they for fair Editha
King Harold's corpse to find,
Fair Edith of the Swan's Neck,
That dame of loving mind.

They found the lady in her bower,
All mournful and alone,
To think of captive England's tears,
And Harold's dying groan.

13.

She came, all veiled her lovely form
In mourner's sable guise,
All streaming were her golden locks,
And dimmed her bright blue eyes ;
Yet came she forth without a tear,
They would no longer flow,
And speechless were her quivering lips,
So bitter was her woe.

14.

She gazed around upon the dead,
And quickly spied the crest
Decked with a ribbon she had torn
From off her own fair breast ;
She knew the belt her hands had wrought,
She knew his pennoned spear,
And though all gashed was every limb,
She knew his face so dear.

15.

One kiss upon his death-cold lips
The lovely Edith pressed,
Then o'er his bloody limbs she threw
Her own sad mourning vest ;
And bade them bear the corpse away
To Waltham's minster fair,
And grace the monarch's funeral
With mass and dirge and prayer.

16.

They laid him in a royal tomb,
And oft the mass did say,
And oft the lady Editha
Came there to weep and pray :
And stretched upon her dying bed,
It was her latest prayer,
With Harold, her own king and love,
Her tomb and dirge to share.

E. A. F.

WALTHEOF AT YORK.

χρυσηλατον γάρ ἄνδρα, τευχήστην ιδεῖν,
 ἄγει γυνή τις σωφρόνως ἡγουμένη.
 Δίκη δ' ἀρ' εἶναι φῆσιν, ὡς τὰ γράμματα
 λέγει, ΚΑΤΑΣΩ Τ' ΑΝΔΡΑ ΤΟΝΔΕ, ΚΑΙ ΠΟΛΙΝ
 ΕΞΕΙ ΠΑΤΡΟΙΑΝ, ΔΩΜΑΤΩΝ Τ' ΕΠΙΣΤΡΟΦΑΣ.

Aesch. Sept. c. Theb. 641.

1.

“Good news, good news for England,
 The promised help is nigh;
 I saw this day o'er Humber's flood
 The Danish Raven fly.
 King Sweyn hath sent to rescue us
 A goodly host and brave,
 And Northern Jarls have bridled well
 The horses of the wave.
 The tall masts waved full gallantly,
 Like a forest on the sea,
 And the decks were thick with mighty men,
 All armed to set us free.

So near the land I saw them,
That while the tale I tell,
I ween the host on England's coast
Hath landed safe and well.
Haste to the shore, King Edgar,
Earl Waltheof, haste amain,
To welcome Denmark's brother kings,
With all their warrior train.
King Sweyn hath sent his brother dear
To battle for the right,
And he hath sent his princely sons
To follow him in fight.
Our men are flocking to the strand
From hamlet and from tower,
And England's voice is raised on high
To greet the Northman's power.
Haste to the shore, King Edgar,
And send thy bodes amain,
To bid the faithful men of York
Await thy royal train.
The citizens are up in arms,
And, round the castle wall,
They cry aloud for England's king
To rend the stranger's thrall.

Sir William in the castle hears,
And trembles every hour,
As the shout of freedom louder swells
Around his leaguered tower.
Let Danish jarl and Saxon thane
To battle follow thee ;
March straight upon the city,
And Northumberland is free.
The Bastard still in Winchester
A little space may reign,
But York hath owned her lawful lord,
Of the old and kingly strain."

2.

Sir William Mallet on the walls
Was pacing to and fro,
And he heard the shouts that echoed wide
Through all the streets below.
Long time in vain, o'er hill and plain,
He had stretched his weary eyne,
If ever in the distant sky
The golden leopards shine.
He sees afar the rising dust,
He hears a trumpet peal ;
Three horsemen hasten to the town ;
Come they for woe or weal ?

He gazes hard ; among them all
No token can he spy,
Nor shield nor pennon bears the signs
Of Norman blazonry.
All wearied are the riders,
All wearied are their steeds,
All tarnished is the horses' gear,
And soiled the horsemen's weeds.
All crushed and torn the housings were
Those gallant horses wore,
And their flanks were wet with foam and sweat,
And smeared with dust and gore.
Ye may hear them gasp for life and death,
As along the road they tear,
Ye may mark the strain of each bounding limb,
And the starting eye-balls, glare.
The warders throng the castle towers,
The townsmen throng the wall ;
They have come within a bow-shot,
Ye may hear the foremost call.
Is it the speech of Normandy ?
They stopped their breath to hear :
“ For England and for Edgar ”
Re-echoed loud and clear.
The townsmen cheer ; the warders scowl ;
Each archer bends his bow,

And their cloth-yard shafts are falling fast,
Like flakes of thickest snow.
'Tis the last struggle ; horse and man
Are straining every limb :
But mark the foremost charger—
The goal is not for him.
His legs are tottering under him,
He sinks upon the plain,
His lord is crushed beneath his fall,
And ne'er shall rise again.
The second presses onward,
He hath all but grasped the prize ;
But a Norman shaft hath pierced his throat ;
By the open gate he lies.
The third, the last — his spurs strike deep—
Saw ye ever such a bound ?
Six arrows bristle on his shield,
But himself is safe and sound.

3.

He hath entered by the open gate ;
The townsmen round him crowd ;
His eyes are dim, his cheek is pale,
But his voice speaks clear and loud ;

He is weary, faint, and hungry,
But he seeks nor food nor rest,
Till he hath told his tale of joy,
And wrought his king's behest.
“Good news, good news, for England,
The promised help is nigh,
Soon shall ye see beneath your walls
The Danish Raven fly.
The Northern chiefs are landed;
They have joined King Edgar's band;
They are marching on the city,
With the noblest of our land.
Three hours' brief space will bring them here,
Keep ye the walls till then;
Stand ready for the hour of fight,
And, when it comes, be men.”

4.

Now soon from gate and rampart
The burghers mark with glee
The marching of the mighty host,
All armed to set them free.
They see the royal banners wave,
Begirt with axe and spear,

The Raven floating in the van,
And the Dragon in the rear.
First in their ranks the Northmen march,
Ranged close in firm array,
An axe on every shoulder,
Sharp whetted for the fray.
Five mighty jarls have marshalled them,
And on the right-hand wing,
Fast marches Osbiorn the brave,
The brother of their king.
On his left his gallant nephews
Lead forth their eager train ;
There is Harold bold and good Canute,
The sons of royal Sweyn :
And, pressing fast behind them,
A glorious sight they see,
Where the standard of the Saxon floats,
As when England yet was free.
There slowly rides, encompassed well
With many a faithful thane,
King Edgar, son of Edward,
Of the old and kingly strain.
His youthful limbs were slender,
But his port was stern and high,
And men saw the blood of Woden rise,
When they marked his kindling eye.

The might of all Northumberland
Is marshalled at his side,
And loyal churls and belted earls
Haste on with eager stride.
There is Merlswine and Cospatric,
And, high o'er the highest there,
Stand forth the sons of Siward,
The children of the Bear.
There is Biorn with the eagle eye,
With his lifted axe in hand ;
There Waltheof stalks, the tallest man
Of all that lofty band.
Like a cliff beside the northern wave,
Like a minster's highest tower,
His giant form is seen afar
O'er all King Edgar's power.
Since Harold died on Senlac's field,
Whose might shall rival thine,
Earl Waltheof, son of Siward,
Of the old Berserker line ?

5.

Sir William Mallet from his tower
Beheld the host draw near,

And the heart that faced King Harold's axe
Now sank aghast with fear.
Forlorn he paces too and fro,
As the trumpets louder peal,
And the tramp of serried ranks resounds
From the glittering lines of steel.
The burghers fill the streets in arms,
Their shouts are loud and long,
Their axes on the castle gates
Are thundering fast and strong.
Without, the hum of warfare breaks,
Like waves on a pebbly shore;
Within, the people's voice peals high,
Like the tempest's fitful roar.
Sir William mused right doubtfully —
“ Shall we rest within the wall ?
But three days' siege, and these weak towers
Before the rebels fall.
Shall we sally forth to battle ?
The townsmen sure will fly,
But ere we reach the city gates,
The Danish host is nigh.
O would that in my native land
I yet had deigned to rest,
Or still in good King Edward's hall
Might dwell a peaceful guest ! ”

He mused and sighed ; and all his band
Looked wistfully around,
As thundering at the city gates
They heard the trumpet's sound.
And many a doughty Frank, I ween,
That knightly baldric wore,
That day would fain by banks of Seine
Have fed his kine once more.

6.

But hark, another sound is heard
High o'er the shouts of war,
And a fiercer light than gleaming arms
Is flashing back from far.
No more they dare the gates to guard,
They shrink to meet their foe ;
On the castle's highest towers they stand,
And each man hurls a fiery brand
On the straw-thatched roofs below.
Ne'er lay the mist upon the hills
Like the smoke that rose on high ;
Ne'er tempest howled like the roaring flames
That curled through all the sky.
The ruddy fires are leaping
O'er roof, and tower, and wall ;

Ye may hear the crackling rafters,
Ye may see the houses fall.
Mid the hail of falling arrows,
Mid the blaze of fiercest fires,
Mid the wail of trembling women,
And the groans of hoary sires ;
With the ground all black beneath their feet,
And the heavens all red with flame,
To the city of their fathers
The sons of Siward came.

7.

Then out and spake Earl Waltheof:
“ To the castle-gates we go :
Let the burghers haste to quench the flames,
And the soldiers charge the foe.
Storm thou the gate, Jarl Osbiorn,
My brother at thy side ;
Canute and Harold, follow next,
With all the Northmen’s pride.
And if they sally in despair,
As I deem full well they may,
Part then your ranks to left and right,
And as they pass for strife or flight,
Then on to smite and slay.

Myself will crouch in ambush,
And the foe that first draws nigh
Shall know full well if Siward's sons
Have shamed their lineage high."

8.

The castle-gates are opened wide ;
'Tis a goodly sight to see
Some rushing forth to combat,
Some rushing forth to flee.
Firm stand the ranks on either side,
As those troubled bands sweep by ;
The axes rise, the axes fall,
To loiter is to die.
Then, as these were pressing forwards,
As these were turning back,
As their bravest hearts their lances couched,
To dare one last attack,
Where the weak are fastest flying,
Where the valiant fiercest close,
Came a louder shout of " Holy Rood,"
And an axe that deadlier rose.
As the lion from his covert springs,
When the roebuck passes by ;

As the eagle on the bounding kid
Sweeps from the cloudless sky ;
As the torrent rushes o'er the fields,
When its dam is torn away ;
As the thunder-flash from the blackened heaven
Leaps forth with lurid ray ;
As Woden's self for slaughter
Uپears his sword of flame,
Full on the quaking Normans
The might of Waltheof came.
Hurrah for the old Berserker charge,
That hath laid the stranger low ;
Hurrah for the Northern battle-axe,
That hath cleft through lance and bow.

9.

They are flying, they are flying ;
Through the burning streets they pour ;
The bulwarks of their good stronghold
May guard them now no more.
The knights of France are flying
From England's yeomen true,
And the Northman's glance hath scared away
The renegades of Rou.

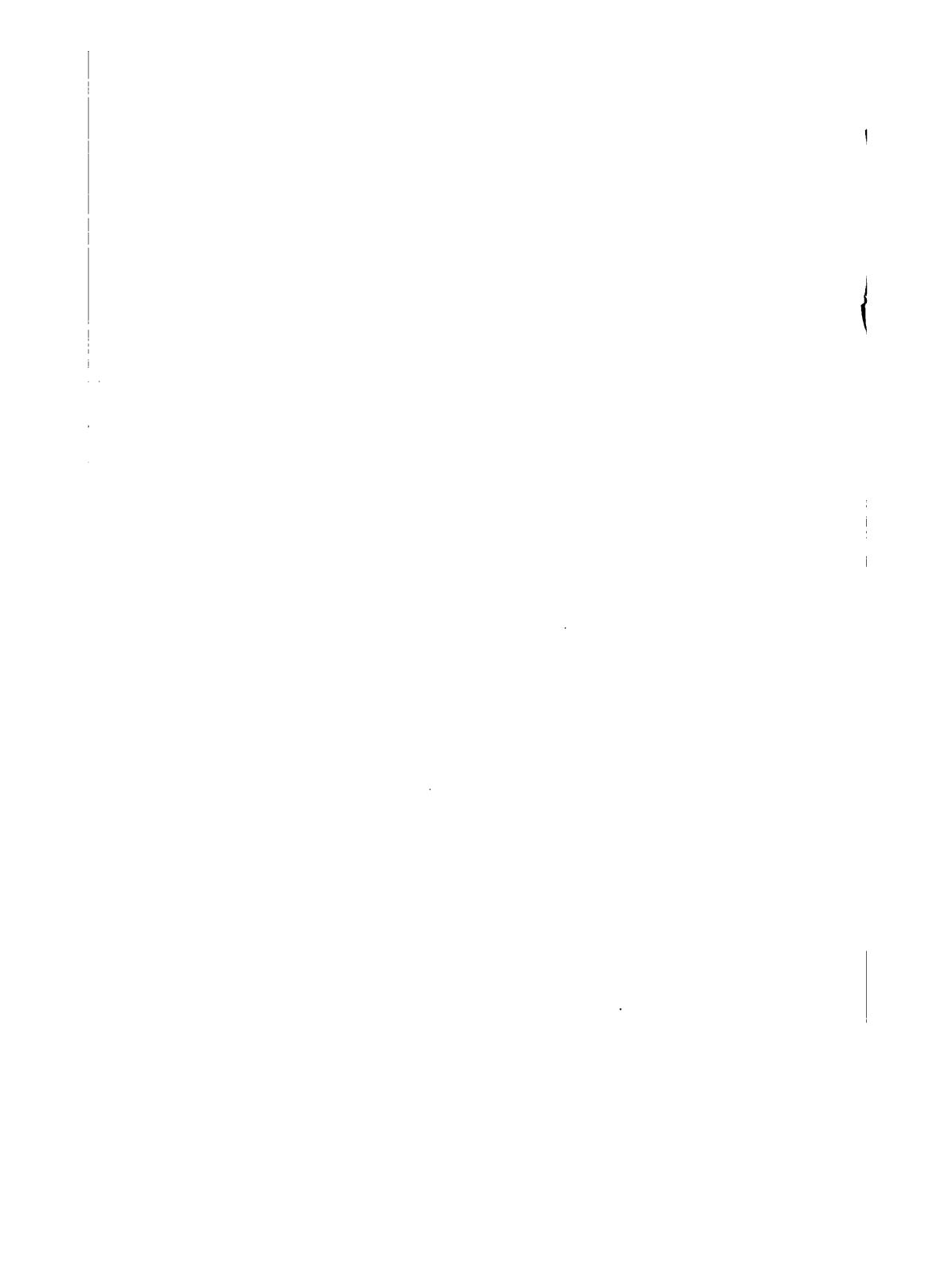
Upon them, Jarls of Denmark,
For the oaths that ye have sworn ;
Upon them, Thanes of England,
For the griefs that ye have borne ;
For the lands your foes have plundered,
For the hearths where spoilers reign,
For the daughters they have ravished,
And the sons that they have slain :
For all the wrongs of England,
Lift up the axe and slay,
'Tis the wergild of King Harold
They are paying back to-day.

10.

And now King Edgar reigns in York,
Where spoilers dwell no more ;
And he bears the sceptre of the realm
That erst his fathers bore.
From Humber to the Scottish march
The English land is free,
Nor doth she Frankish trumpet hear,
Nor Frankish banner see.
The Bastard quakes in Winchester,
Upon his blood-stained throne,

When he hears that England's trueborn prince
 His own again hath won.
'Twas good to see the Saxon king,
 In all his pomp and pride,
As he held his crowning festival
 At holy Christmas-tide.
All in Saint Peter's minster fair
 A royal throne is set,
And Danish jarl and Saxon thane
 Around its steps are met.
King Edgar stood before them all,
 And they reared him on a shield,
And hailed him King of Englishmen
 In court and battle-field.
He swore to rule and guard his realm
 As his fathers did of old,
And all the dooms of King Canute
 Right faithfully to hold.
They put the crown upon his brow,
 The sceptre in his hand ;
And he sat before his people,
 The prince of all the land.
His loyal churls and belted earls
 Are gathered at his side,

The men whose axes smote to earth
 The Norman's boasted pride ;
And, high above the highest,
 And nearest to the king,
The might of Waltheof foremost stood
 Of all that glittering ring.
He stood beside a crownéd king
 With orb and sceptre dight,
A king for whom his own right hand
 Had won his princely right.
A freeborn people joyously
 Around their monarch throng,
A people whom his lifted axe
 Had saved from sternest wrong.
Then rich was Waltheof's glory,
 And priceless his renown ;
But yet upon Saint Giles's hill
 He won a brighter crown,
When they reared the lofty scaffold,
 And the steel was lifted high,
And for England's right and freedom
 He knelt him down to die.



MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

R



MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

ALARIC AT ROME.

THE subject of the following piece will be found in the 31st chapter of Gibbon, from which the story is taken without alteration.

1.

THERE is weeping in the city,
There is shouting at the gate,
The hill-tops seven rock to and fro
Before their coming fate ;
What hand can paint the triumph,
What tongue the woe can tell,
When 'neath the Northman's conquering sword
The Eternal City fell ?

2.

She heard the trumpet at her gates
Peal forth its voice of fear,
And she trembled as she trembled not
When Porsena drew near ;

The rock that frowned in maiden strength,
When the Gaul lay spread below,
Now lowly bends its hoary head
To greet a mightier foe.

3.

The wall that mocked the Samnite's pride,
And the might of eastern thrones,
Whence Hannibal had turned away,
Its fated master owns.
Unscathed by homebred traitor,
Unspoiled by foreign lord,
The trophies of twelve ages
Lay beneath the Gothic sword.

4.

And yet she had a guardian once,
The Northman's worthy foe,
And the Goth himself hath felt the might
Of dauntless Stilicho.
But he who won Pollentia's field
A traitor's death must die ;
And who shall guard the Cæsar's throne,
When Alaric draws nigh ?

5.

No guard he needs ; far, far away
Within Ravenna's towers,
Where foeman's foot may never tread,
He wiles away the hours.
Enough of fame on battle-fields
A hundred kings have won,
And a father's laurels claim no more
From Theodosius' son.

6.

There let him sleep ; while on his realm
The bolt of judgment falls,
While on the stricken Babylon
A world for vengeance calls.
The good right hand that guarded him
Himself hath lopped away ;
And the Goth may glut his fiercest wrath,
And none shall say him nay.

7.

See, by the gates which heard so oft
The laurelled coursers tread,
A thousand ghosts are flitting round
Of kings to slaughter led.

From the desert unto Albyn's hills,
From Ind to Ocean's foam,
They gather fast, a grisly band,
To howl o'er falling Rome.

8.

But yet another cry of blood
Peals with a fiercer yell,
Where Christians sat and cheered with glee,
When the slaughtered swordsman fell ;
Where Christian maidens and matrons sat,
Nor turned their face away,
When in the hungry lion's grasp
The freeborn captive lay.

9.

And yet another deed of blood,
Blood shed before your eyes,
Blood that no gifts may ever stanch,
For treble vengeance cries ;
Blood of your wives and children slain
To glut the pride of Rome—
Strike deep, Goth, Vandal, Frank, and Hun,
Your hour at last is come.

10.

'Twas midnight, and the stars above
Their feeble light had veiled,
When the open gates of vanquished Rome
The Northern victor hailed;
When the queen of all the nations,
Herself in turn a slave,
Crouched low to kiss his mailed hand,
And stay his lifted glaive.

11.

On high the glaive is lifted—
But when captives bend to pray,
There is mercy in the clear blue eye
Which in fight but sees to slay.
Where the blood of mothers and their babes
At Christians' bidding ran,
Now reigns who better knows the law
That speaks of love to man.

12.

Then out and spake King Alaric,
“ The man that draws the sword
Must pay his daring with his life
Before his outraged lord;

But men, I ween, in Rome are few,
And babes I may not slay;
But the guilty city's plunder
For her deeds of blood shall pay."

13.

Now fast through all the city
The conquerors pour amain,
And the torch-light gleams o'er the goodly spoils
Of many a Consul's train;
They are dragging forth red gold and gems
From many a lordly hall,
And the Northman wraps his stalwart frame
In the Cæsar's crimson pall.

14.

Through many a stately palace,
Where late the servile chain
Clanked o'er their fathers' freeborn limbs
The Northern victors reign.
From many an arch of triumph,
Where their fathers crouch in stone,
The laurelled Cæsar wondering looks
Upon his master's throne.

15.

But far on the Quirinal
An aged nun there dwelt,
And day and night in fervent prayer
Before her Lord she knelt ;
And she prayed, whene'er the trumpet-peal
Bespoke the spoiler nigh,
That Heaven would guard the precious things
That round about her lie.

16.

Then came a shout that echoed loud
Throughout her lowly shrine,
“ Bring forth the gold and silver
That is no longer thine.
And if aught of gems or goodly gear
To thee or thine belong,
But yield them freely to thy lord,
And none shall work thee wrong.”

17.

She showed them straight of precious things
A vast and wondrous hoard,
Where gold and silver ingots,
And costly robes were stored :

There were cups that gleamed with priceless gems,
And plates of massive gold ;
And the Northmen deemed such goodly ware
Did Cæsar's banquet hold.

18.

Then out and spake that aged nun :
“ Nor gold nor gems have I ;
These are the blest Apostles' stores,
Who reign with Christ on high.
Ye see the holy chalice,
Ye see the priestly pall,
Which this lowly roof might better guard
Than the high Anician hall.

19.

“ Now bear away the treasure,
If such a deed ye dare.
Ye know there is a God on high
Who loveth well to spare ;
But yet he hath his burning wrath,
Which nor prayer nor gifts may turn,
For them who spoil his sacred things,
And his holy altars spurn.”

20.

Thus spake a woman lone and old,
While arméd warriors heard ;
And hearts that never quailed in fight,
Sank at her warning word.
Unharmed they left the treasure,
And ran with speed to bring
The tidings of that wondrous sight
To Alaric the king.

21.

They told him of the goodly store,
So rich and rare to see ;
They told him of the lonely guard,
As weak as weak might be ;
They told him of the burning words
That laid their spirits low,
How a woman's voice could deeper smite
Than the sword of Stilicho.

22.

Then out and spake King Alaric :
“ From man I scorn to fly,
But I war not with Apostles
Who reign with Christ on high.

Bring forth the holy treasures,
And guard them safe and well,
To their home on the lofty Vatican,
Where the Roman pontiffs dwell.

23.

“ Now doffed be every helmet
And sheathed be every sword,
And the lords of earth all lowly bend
Before a mightier Lord.
Let Goth and Roman follow
Where the holy treasures go,
And whoe'er that sacred threshold keeps
Nor spoil nor harm shall know.”

24.

Now might ye see by the first fair beams
Of rosy-fingered morn,
Through the captive city’s wondering streets
Those goodly treasures borne ;
Ye might deem ’twas the conqueror’s triumph pomp
As his armed bands swept by,
And the hands that had been first in fight
The vessels bore on high.

25.

But doffed is every helmet,
And sheathed is every sword,
And the lords of earth all lowly bend
Before a mightier Lord :
Never, I ween, did conquered town
See such another throng,
As slave and victor, side by side,
Like brothers passed along.

26.

No Cæsar on his triumph car,
When captive nations bow,
E'er felt a throb of joy so pure
As Alaric hath now ;
When he spared the blest Apostles' store,
And bare them safe and well,
To their home on the lofty Vatican,
Where the Roman pontiffs dwell.

27.

Then mock not at the days of old,
When the conquering Northman came,
On the haughty sons of lordly Rome
To wreak our fathers' shame ;

When the chiefs that freeborn hands had crowned
In the despot's palace dwelt,
And freemen stood around the throne,
Where a tyrant's slaves had knelt.

28.

And though many a chief of many a land
To pity's voice hath bent,
And the foremost in the battle-field
Is the foremost to relent ;
Yet who such deeds of mercy,
Such deeds of faith, can tell,
As when beneath the Gothic sword
The Eternal City fell ?

E. A. F.

RECOLLECTIONS OF CHILDHOOD.

THE following stanzas are no more than simple records of actual recollections, without further connection than as they chanced to arise from time to time in the writer's mind. The scenes among which the years of childhood are passed seem generally to have great influence on the feelings and forms of thought in after-life; and the dwelling among things of old interest is known to leave a very different impression from the dull monotony which results from their absence. Of the following, some of the facts recorded took place in the Himalayas, some in the plains of India. Further detail is perhaps scarcely needed, as it is hoped the incidents will sufficiently explain themselves.

1.

THOUGHTS, which unbidden throng upon the mind,—
Rays from the suns that shone in earlier years,—
Stars, that have left their track of light behind,
Where memory mellows all our childish fears
And hopes and sorrows,—and from out our tears
Draws sweetness only,—these in after-time
The soul recalling still the echo hears
Of mirth and gladness, like a far-off chime,
When aye each morning brake upon a gladsome clime.

2.

These, as all fitfully they come and go
And wake again past joy within the breast,
These would I stay,—for, though I may not know
The peace of childhood and its tranquil rest
Again, yet oft returning as a guest
Most welcome, while my thoughts at random stray,
Some recollection, cherished and imprest
Perchance with fairer hues, will softly play
Upon the far-seen past, like twilight's doubtful ray.

3.

Why love I so the mountains as they rise
With snow-capped summits, which the evening light
Most fondly tinges with a thousand dyes?
Why ever pass before my fancied sight
The varied valley and the beetling height
And foaming waters? Why so often wander
My thoughts through scenes so joyous and so bright,
Which to my seeming, as on them I ponder,
In childhood's glory bathed repose so sweetly yonder?

4.

For scarce I deem would there my visions roam
So oft, if 'twere not that they sought again

The glowing scenes of childhood's early home :

Ah! strange (amid the changeful joy and pain,
Which, like the shadows sweeping o'er a plain,
Checker our onward journey through this scene
 Of labour tempest-tossed upon the main),
Most strange it seems to pierce the mists between
And think what we are now and what we once have
 been.

5.

If not for us in childhood's careless day
 'Mid scenes unvaried rose each morning sun,
And one like to another passed away,
 Leaving no memory when its course was run,—
If not all feebly was our life begun
 'Mid sights that clog and dull the torpid soul,—
O often, ere this earthly strife be done,
Our thoughts, a moment breaking from control,
Will watch again the stream of childhood onward roll.

6.

Thus, as the thoughts of early hours return,
 Would I record them in my fitful strain :
For stars, that with uncertain glances burn,
 And thoughts, that scarce one moment long remain,

If of them yet a sign we would retain,
Must, as they rise before us, each receive
Their hasty chronicling, and thus again,
While o'er lost hours of happiness we grieve,
May reawakened joy our throbbing bosom heave.

7.

Not in the stirring hours, when hearts beat high
With hopes of glory for the coming days,—
Not in the rude glare of the noonday sky,
While all are hurrying, each their several ways
Of toil for wealth, or power, or hard won praise,—
The things that men call real,—ere the turn
Of wasting life bedims their luring rays,—
Not amid human din may we discern
The holy lights, that still, though faint, most purely burn

8.

In the deep distance, where the scarce seen star
Still sheds a lingering light on childhood's home
With lustre meek, like voices heard from far
Calling us backward. On the tossing foam
Where in life's voyage wearily we roam,

The fitful flicker of that light is seen,
Like well-known beacon from a distant dome,—
And on the waters, as they roll between,
Falls in one tender line of ever trembling sheen.

9.

So ye, who long to mingle in the strife
And hear of mighty deeds and high emprise
And stirring scenes with varied tumult rife,
Follow not further. On the land that lies
In the far distance, with empurpling dyes
The hallowed light is resting, like the close
Of cloudless evening: to the raptured eyes
Even brighter yet the line of radiance grows,
Calm as the sunny face of childhood in repose.

10.

And here I rest me in that pictured clime,
Which still I love awhile to frame at will,
Poor mirror of that joyous early time:—
So softly sweet the well-known voices thrill;
So sadly, yet so loved, each vale and hill

And tranquil waters rise mine eyes before,—
All motionless, all peaceful now and still,
Speaking so gently of the days of yore,—
Sweet vision of the hours that may be mine no more.

11.

Even as I gaze, the fleeting colours change :
One scene is past ; another comes to view,
Even as my thoughts with transient pleasure range
Through well-known regions. Each with joyous hue,
Breaking the mantling mists, bursts forth anew :—
There upward still the mountain summits soar,
Against the golden sunset rising blue,—
There the ribbed clouds stretch onward more and more,
Wave heaving after wave, a sea without a shore.

12.

So seem they now,—those pictures calm and sweet,
Whereon the lights of early gladness play,
Fair spots to rest awhile the weary feet,—
Though, further from them as I wend each day,
Something of this their fairness fades away,

Like the faint colours of a breaking dream:
One moment yet, while back my glances stray,
Fain would I dwell upon some passing gleam,
Though poor in words so weak must aye the image seem.

13.

See, the first blush across the East is stealing,
Tinging with trembling light the slumbrous air,
Softly the hues of early morn revealing
In scarce seen tints most tremulous and fair,
Ere yet they deepen into glory there; —
See, rising dark against the quivering light,
The mountains on their snow-capped peaks declare
The coming splendours, as with hues more bright
Are lifted up on high their giant crests bedight.

14.

The mountains rose against the morning sky :
Beneath, in darkness clad, the valleys lay :
Nought in their boundless depths might you descry
Save mists all motionless and vapours grey,
Like the calm waters of a windless bay.

And there in undisturbed repose they slept
Beneath the mountain shadows. Far away,
Where, through the plain beyond, its course it kept,
One silver-gleaming line a mighty river swept.

15.

Ah! well I summon back that early hour
Upon the mountain side: there long ago—
'Twas told me—come from far with whelming power
A conqueror rested on the plains below,
Where yonder river's silvery waters flow,—
Yet came no further, for their hearts grew cold
Amidst those mighty mountains: and the foe
Saw them no more; and still the tale is told,
Where 'neath those craggy peaks Iskander* camped
of old.

16.

And long I looked upon that time-known stream:
Yet thought not long upon the olden days,—
For more I watched the waters' fitful gleam,
And more I looked upon the dying rays
Of the faint morning star, ere yet the blaze

* The Eastern name for Alexander the Great.

That quenched the lustre of the orb of night,
Should hide her last companion from my gaze ;
And more the partridge in her startled flight,
As whirring on it swept, I followed with my sight.

17.

So gazed I then in childhood's happy mood ;
Yet never of that king I since have read,
But straight I thought me of how then I stood
Scarce conscious, where the morning light was shed
On that same stream, with many a mountain head
Upreamed around me, as long years ago
They cast their shadows on the hosts he led :
Thus, as of him I read, I see below
In fancied gaze again that mighty river flow.

18.

The voice, that told me of that olden tale
That early morn, I ne'er shall hear again—
The hand, that then across the misty vale
Did guide my sight towards the distant plain,

I never more shall clasp: yet not in vain,
I deem is cherished as a token dear
The memory of the love that watched me then:
And still would I the fancied echo hear,
Though ne'er that well-loved voice shall break upon
mine ear.

19.

Again I muse upon a sadder scene,
As if once more the parting hour drew near:
Almost I seem, though years have passed between,
The reawakened tones of love to hear,
The last that from that voice my childish ear
Should e'er receive:—upon the barren sand
By the stream side beneath the evening clear
In silent sorrow did I clasp that hand,
As soon to leave behind that well-loved Eastern land.

20.

Awhile, around, the hissing balls we heard
At random sent from far: yet in that hour
No thought of fear within my heart was stirred,
And what might startle now had then no power:
Careless I gazed upon the distant tower,

Secure as having one to guard me well ;
Only the cloud of parting seemed to lower,
And dim the twilight with a dreary spell,
For even in childhood's breast may deepest sadness
dwell.

21.

There, since that day, almost in that same scene,
Has warfare revelled in its grim array,
And there the battle and its woes have been :
Yet muse I not upon the fiery fray :—
My thoughts are wandering to a sadder day,
And something of the parting words I hear :
And yet again beneath the twilight ray,
The tower, the stream, the lonesome banks appear,
And evening's fitful sounds are striking on mine ear.

22.

For scarcely may such memories fade away,
But force themselves upon us at their will,
And lead us captives to their gentle sway,
Guiding us back to many a vale and hill
And mazy forest, well-known scenes that still

Appear to us familiar, where we strayed
Through every dell, by every mountain rill,
And listened to the murmuring that it made,
As down its channeled course with joyous leap it played.

23.

'Mid wearying toil, in many a different scene,
Or if perchance ambition stir the breast,
Some wandering thought of hours that once have been,
Some echo faint of voices now at rest
Will lend awhile its stillness : if oppressed
With sadness,—yet from out the treasured store
Perchance there will arise at our behest
Some recollection of the days of yore,
And place our earlier self again our eyes before.

24.

There is a calmness we can never know,
Save in the memories of our early years,
Though ever further from them as we go,
More dim their image through the mist appears ;
Still over all our joys or hopes or fears,

Our passing sorrows and our gladsome days,
Is shed a light harmonious, and the tears
Of childhood seem to catch the sunset rays,
Which ever softer seem and brighter, as we gaze.

25.

Image of peace, O fade not hence away :
Still with thy blissful light my labour cheer ;
O still attend me in my lengthening way,
And with thy well-loved tones yet soothe mine ear,
The echoes of the song so wondrous clear,
That ever seem to me those years to sing
In changeless sweetness : these whene'er I hear,
Old scenes from out the mantling darkness spring,
And o'er my dreaming soul their magic stillness fling.

26.

Oft have I looked upon the burning plain,
As stretching out in endless space it lay,
Striving to scan its wildering waste in vain,
While the shades deepened at the close of day ;
And then perchance the wanling light would play

Upon some distant watch tower, or illume
In dismal mockery with its wanton ray
The darkness of some solitary tomb,
Standing in dreary state as loving only gloom.

27.

And I have watched the massy clouds arise,
Little by little o'er the plain, — so slow
The awful pile uprose before mine eyes,
Seeming in silence horrible to throw
A deadly gloom o'er all the world below,
Stilling all sound of living things, and tell,
With strange and fearful signs, of coming woe,
Laden with many a dark and baleful spell
From the unseen abodes where the dread thunders
dwell.

28.

And many a time on Gunga's sacred breast
Have I beheld the sun's departing ray
Gleam fondly, as he hastened to his rest,
And heard in cadence soft the measured play
Of oars, that fell as weary of the way

Along the sleeping waters : from the shore
Came fitful sounds that rise at close of day,
When the dull wearing round of toil is o'er,
And care less anxious grows and sorrow seems less
sore.

29.

O city * fair of palaces and shrines,
Still softly mirrored in the waters clear,
As I have watched it, thy loved image shines;
City of temples, we are wont to hear
Tales of thy fame in many a bygone year,
And in this home of thy primæval race
The relics of thine olden pride appear ;
I know thee only as my native place,
And still from time to time thine image love to trace,

30.

And watch thy minarets so bright and tall
Reflected in the tranquil stream below,
And the light boats with slumbrous motion fall
Dreamily down the waters, and the glow
Of evening tinge the waves that to and fro

* Benares.

Move scarce a moment long, and on the sand,
While the sun's rays their parting glory throw,
See the dark vultures feast in noisome band,
And the crane keep afar her solitary stand.

31.

Visions of peace, O fade not hence away ;
Ye scarce can fade, while fondly yet we turn
In the dull labour of our later day
To that bright budding time, and there discern
The clearer light, which evermore will burn
Seeming the purer, the more vexed we grow
With the world's hardness : there we yet may learn
A softer peace, a holier joy to know,
Than busy toil may give or praise or fame bestow.

32.

Melt not away, thou mirror bright and clear :
And chide not ye, whose hearts are full of care
For the world's business, that to me more dear
Are thoughts of childhood, and the memories fair
Of friends departed. Were 't not well to spare

A few brief moments yet again to wander
In thought 'mid flowering trees whose branches bear
All golden fruits, and with old joy to ponder
On fancied scenes of bliss that still seem blooming
yonder?

33.

So pass we meekly onwards. Well I deem,
Thoughts such as these are solace sweet and dear ;
Yet life may not be made a waking dream,
Nor may we alway list with spell-bound ear
To the low harmonies, which soft and clear
Play round the home of childhood : we must wend,
Each on our journey, knowing not how near
May be the goal, yet knowing, if we bend
To God's will, we shall rest from labour in the end.

34.

And if to any such like thoughts may seem
Familiar nor distasteful,—then of me
No more as of a stranger let him deem :
For he hath seen the things that I would see,
And with my thoughts held converse long and free.

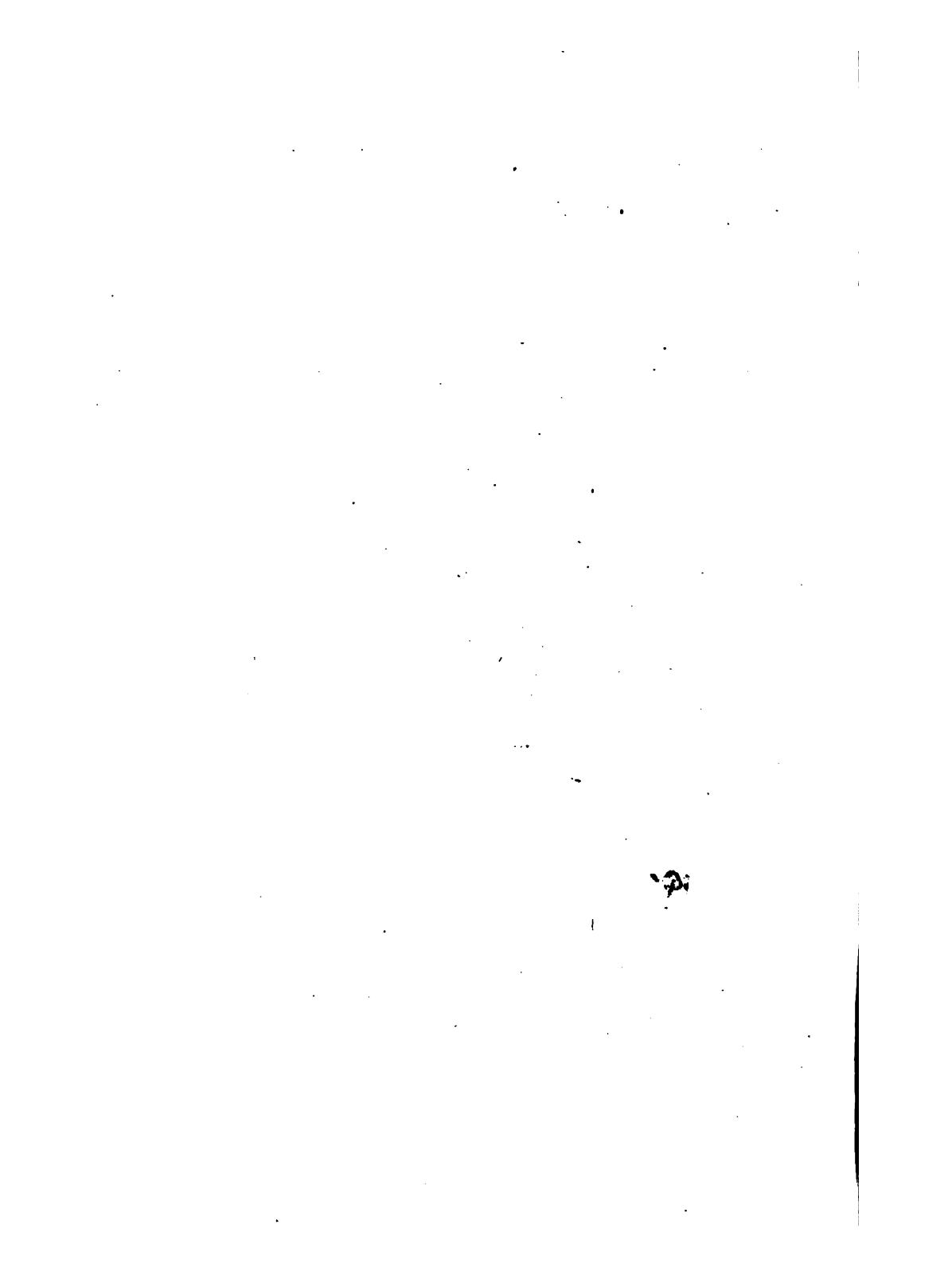
And let him think, that we are not alone,
Whate'er of space between us there may be ;
My heart would fain be moving with his own,
Linked in a secret bond of friendship, though unknown.

G. W. C.

THE END.

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